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THE ODYSSEY OF
FRANCIS XAVIER

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BY

THEODORE MAYNARD

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO

1936

BX4700
F8M5

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

114 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO
88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E C 4
6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA
53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY
36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

MAYNARD

THE ODYSSEY OF FRANCIS XAVIER

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FIRST EDITION



History

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1220889

TO MY FATHER

SVNT PLVRIMA, ET SVNT MAXIMA XAVERII MIRACVLA ;
IGNATII MIRACVLVM EST MAXIMVM : XAVERIVS

—*Monumenta Xaveriana*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to those who read this book in MS or proof, either in whole or in part, for their valuable advice : Monsignor Peter Guilday, Fathers Neil Boyton, S. J., Robert Patterson, S. J., Elwood Berry, Donald Hayne, and Mr. T. H. Maynard. To Father Francis E. Keenan, S.J., Rector of Woodstock College, my thanks are due for the loan of books not easily procurable.

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CHAPTER I

THE BASQUE BOYHOOD

OF ALL the races of Europe the Basques are the most mysterious. Though politically French or Spanish, according to the side of the Pyrenees on which they live, the deadliest insult that can be offered them is to mistake them for either Frenchmen or Spaniards. They will have you understand that they are Basques, a people unique and apart.

Nobody knows their origin, and it is hardly wilder to guess at the Atlanteans than at the Egyptians or Hittites. We have no record of a time when they were not where they still are, among the mountains and by the sea; and though they long ago lost their national independence, they will never surrender their racial aloofness.

Theirs is a land of sharp gorges, down which rivers rage to the Biscayan Bay. It is equally a land where the winds indulge every fantasticality and caprice; of sudden thunder storms, of rain coming down in sheets and turning to hail under an inky sky, with no warning except that of dust blown in spirals along the streets.

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Yet its valleys are rich in colour. Forests of beeches and oaks and pines and chestnuts brighten to the spring, and burn slowly to the autumn's bronze and gold. There, too, are orchards and enamelled pastures and blazing as well as smouldering flowers. Rugged as are the mountains, yellow sandstone streaks the rocks and gleams like gold in the sun. Everywhere one hears songs and the gay or solemn sound of bells.

In nothing are the Basques more solitary than in a language which seemingly has no relation to any other. Their literature is exceedingly meagre, and the first printed book in Basque did not appear until 1545. But the reason for this paucity of the written word is that the genius of the language lies in living speech. It is the language of vocal poets, popular and suddenly inspired, untrammelled by any of the rules of a frigid classicism, of which indeed they know nothing. For the same reason it is the language of spontaneous and fiery oratory.

This was the heritage of Francis Xavier. (Though he left his country early in life, never to see it again except once and then only for a few days, he was indelibly marked by it. The land had turned his body, as his will was later to be turned, into fine steel.) On his death-bed on the island of Sancian, delirium transported him back to his boyhood, and those around his bed heard him muttering Basque.

The sturdy little castle of Xavier stands on a slight eminence opposite a mountain near the river Aragon, hidden among the forests of the southern slope of the

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Pyrenees. It is a country of pasturage, but it also produces wine and oil and cheese. Little more than a mile away is the famous monastery of San Salvador de Leyre, the burial place of the kings of Navarre, and on the opposite bank of the Aragon stands Soz, the birth-place of Ferdinand the Catholic. It is all at once wild and tame, intimately romantic.

While the priests in the castle chapel adjoining his mother's room were singing the Passion, Francis was born on the morning of April 7, 1506. It was Tuesday of Holy Week.

Dofia Maria was then well over forty, and Francis was the last of her children. After he had been baptized a few days later, his christening robe was hung, in accordance with custom, along with those of his five brothers and sisters on a rail over the font.

All the people of the Iberian peninsula were intensely Catholic, but none of its people were so passionately religious as the Basques. The great crusading effort which had dislodged the Moors was still fresh in everybody's mind. And mysticism was in the very air they breathed, a mysticism touched, as was everything in that land, with a chivalrous and crusading spirit, a violent recoil from all that had so long threatened it.

Perhaps there was no family even among the Basques so pious as that of the Xaviers. The fact that they enlarged the parish church and endowed an *abbadia*—that is a house of secular priests, living under a rule almost as strict as that of a monastery—would not of itself prove

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that the Xaviers were personally devout.¹ Often enough such endowments have been made by those who were slack in their religious and moral life, and offered as a form of counterbalance to laxity. But the history of the family shows with what seriousness religion was practised by the Xaviers. One of the three daughters, Magdalen had two years before the birth of Francis left the court of Isabella the Catholic, where she had been a lady-in-waiting, to become a Poor Clare (and afterwards Abbess) at Gandia. Though she probably never saw her little brother, unless it was dimly through a grille covered by a veil, she later played a decisive part at a critical moment in his life. Her younger sister was, in 1506, preparing to enter a convent in Pamplona. If Francis's two brothers, Michael and John, adopted the profession of arms, that too was in the spirit of religion, for the temper of Spanish piety was military.

Their father, John de Jassu, however, was not a soldier but a lawyer, and became Auditor of the Court at Pamplona. The family fortunes of the Jassus, their solid though unpretentious affluence and their patent of nobility, had been established by faithful service to the Crown of Navarre, and seemed secured by continued fidelity.

The Jassus had originated from the French side of the mountains, but their engrossment in affairs of state had drawn them to Spanish Navarre. Their ability had served them well, but shrewd marriages had also

¹ Cros (*Documents Nouveaux*, pp. 98-103, 122-128) quotes the deeds of endowment, and the regulations laid down for the *abbadia*.

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served.² John de Jassu married an heiress who brought him the estates and titles of Azpilcueta from her father, and from her mother those of Xavier. Francis, according to Spanish usage, took his name from his mother, as his elder brother inherited from her the title of Azpilcueta. It was a family distantly related to the royal houses of both Aragon and Navarre.

If the family of Jassu y Xavier had risen in the world through their attachment to the Crown of Navarre, they were destined to be ruined through the same attachment. In 1504, Queen Isabella died, and a few months later Ferdinand of Aragon married the celebrated beauty, Germaine de Foix, a girl of eighteen.

Troubles soon began for him. His son-in-law, Philip of Austria, attempted to drive him from the throne, and might have succeeded had he not died. Philip's widow, poor mad Queen Joan, could not bear to bury her adored husband, so wandered aimlessly around with his corpse. The resulting confusion gave Ferdinand his opportunity, of which he was quick—clever politician as he was—to take advantage. In his desire to consolidate his threatened power, he planned to annex the part of Navarre that lay south of the mountains, and Navarre, seeking protection, edged towards allying itself with France.

In 1512, Gaston de Foix, brother of the Queen of Aragon and cousin to the Queen of Navarre, defeated the Spaniards at Ravenna. But his death at the moment of

² Cros (*Doc. Nouv.*, pp. 17 *et seq.*) gives an account of the Jassu ancestors. The name was variously spelled as *Yatou*, *Jasu*, *Jacssu*, *Jasso*, and *Jassu*.

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victory demoralized the French forces, and Ferdinand perceived that the moment for which he had been waiting had arrived : he might now safely snatch at Navarre. The Holy League had been joined by the Pope, the Emperor, Venice, and England—and France was the common enemy of this formidable alliance. The Marquis of Dorset landed at Guipuzcoa with ten thousand men, and the Duke of Alva marched against Navarre. King John, knowing that he was hopelessly outnumbered by the Spanish and English, and that he could expect no help from the French at such a moment, fled in 1512 to Bayonne. In 1515 Spanish Navarre was formally annexed by Aragon.

John de Jassu accompanied his royal master, and remained in exile with him until 1515, when he returned to Xavier Castle only to die, we must suppose borne under by grief over his country's lost independence.

But his sons remained faithful to the defeated cause, and when Ferdinand died in 1516, the disaffected in Navarre thought that they now had a chance to fling off the galling Spanish yoke. Their incalcitrance brought further disaster to the Xaviers. Cardinal Ximenes, who more than any other man had been the architect of the new Spain, acted with decision against the rebels. The young king, Charles V, was abroad ; therefore, though over eighty, the Cardinal had to take upon himself the suppression of the insurrection. He issued the order that every stronghold in Navarre should be entirely destroyed. The castle of Azpilcueta was accordingly razed, but that

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of Xavier, being less of a menace, was allowed to stand as a residence, though its fortifications were pulled down. Ten-year-old Francis must have witnessed with childish resentment and bewilderment the way the Spanish soldiers treated his home.

Here we may note one of the many ironies of history. It was Cardinal Ximenes, who must be given the main credit for having initiated Catholic Reform—the reaction which prepared the way, long before the revolt against the Church broke out in Germany, for the Counter-Reformation. The family against which he now acted so severely contained in Francis one who was destined to be the most brilliant member of the religious order that was the chief weapon of the Catholic reaction.

There is a still stranger fact to be remembered. When a new revolt, that of the *Comuneros*, broke out in 1521, and when the Navarrese, this time aided by Francis I, tried once more to recover their independence, among the besiegers of Pamplona were the two brothers of Francis Xavier. And the officer who refused to surrender the castle was Ignatius Loyola. This dapper little man, with his head full of *Amadis de Gaul* and his heart full of Quixotic valour, who was something of a poet, and who fancied himself as a lady-killer, had his leg fractured by a cannon ball which may (for all one knows) have been fired by one of the Xaviers—a fascinating possibility!

What is certain is that the wound was the incidental cause of a famous conversion, and of the founding of the

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Society of Jesus. Providentially the wound was severe. Had it been lighter there would have been no prolonged convalescence and no profound meditation upon the things of eternity. All this happened when Francis Xavier was fifteen. Though he did not know it, the date of May 20, 1521, marked for him an event of overwhelming importance.

The success of the insurgents against the garrison of Pamplona was abortive. Soon afterwards they suffered defeat at Noain, and it was the eclipse of their cause.

But the Xaviers, with a band of irreconcilables, bitterly held out in the mountains, though by doing so they only brought further hardships upon their family. The various rents, dues and taxes which had formed the principal part of the income of Doña Maria Azpilcueta y Xavier y Jassu could no longer be collected. The peasants cut down her trees with impunity and the shepherds refused to pay for pasturage.⁸ Little was left now to lose except life, and about that the Xaviers were indifferent. Michael and John, though still at large, were condemned to death, being exempted from the general amnesty of December 15, 1523. Their fantastic sense of honour, their proud adherence to a hopeless cause, their valour in face of imminent danger—all these things must have made a deep impression upon Francis during his formative years. One surmises that among the reasons that made the boy decide against being a soldier

⁸ Cros (*Doc. Nouv.*, pp. 108-11) cites an earlier petition of the peasantry against these exactions, and from this we may see clearly what the source was of part at least of the Xavier fortune.

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was a determination never to take service under a king who was the enemy of Navarre ; there was now no other king for him to serve.

Michael and John had long known their struggle was futile. They had amply satisfied the demands of honour, and they had amply proved their courage. Coming from a line of hard-headed lawyers and men of affairs, their practicality prevailed in the end. On February 19, 1524, they made their submission to Charles V. The Spanish authorities were probably as weary as were the insurgents of a hide-and-seek warfare among the fastnesses of the Pyrenees, and so promised pardon and restitution of at least some part of their income. Michael and John were no doubt glad to return to the dilapidated castle, and to the remnants of their fortune.

Francis was now eighteen. He had lived through all those troubled years with his mother in the dour poverty of gentility. With the coming of peace, the hour had struck when he had to be thinking of his own career. Probably he had long since made up his mind on the subject—for his ideas were always very definite—but now at last he was able to do what he wanted. This was to follow a course of study at a university with the object of preparing himself for a position such as had been held by his father, or for a comfortable ecclesiastical sinecure. The ambitious youngest son was well aware of his own gifts, and was bent upon using them to the best possible advantage. His father had studied at Bologna, of which university he had been a doctor of laws. Francis decided that he too would study abroad.

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About his life, up to this point, we know very little, for it had been submerged in the history of his family. But it is possible to infer a good deal with safety. He had been brought up with such careful strictness by his mother that it would seem that no saint ever had a better early training. Yet this very fact may have been the chief obstacle to positive sanctity. The rigid routine of the household, its precise, conventional piety, had made Francis what would be called today a model boy. All he had to do was to continue his practices of piety. The ideal was already achieved. If he showed no trace of that distressing mawkish religiosity of adolescence, he was also without any deep religious enthusiasm. His time had not yet come.

He was tall, well-built and handsome, and he gave a good deal of thought to his clothes. Though he was very much the *hidalgo*, he was too much of an aristocrat to be a snob—witness his intimate friendship a little later with the peasant boy Peter Faber at the University of Paris. Everybody liked him, we may be sure, because of that affability and cheerfulness which were always his characteristics. But everybody noticed his grave reserve—something that entirely disappeared after his conversion.

All Basques are good at athletic sports, but Francis was exceptionally good, and especially was he proud of his ability to run and jump, which must have made him a noted executant of the gymnastic Basque dances. And this must have given him a special advantage, and made him a local hero, at the *jeu de paume*.

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This is the game from which both tennis and the dazzling modern pelota derive. Every Basque boy, then as now, began, almost as soon as he was able to walk, to practice hitting a ball against a wall. Every church, in these districts, had a ball-court erected against one of its walls. Every gentleman's house was equipped for the game. There could have been little for Francis to do during the years when he was growing up except play hand-ball, and hunt. At eighteen his body was compounded of whipcord and steel. Without knowing it, he had already acquired part of the necessary training for his arduous work in the Orient.

But not even a Basque could be always playing ball. Francis had to be educated, and luckily he showed a liking for books. We do not know, however, where he went to school, or whether he went at all, though we know that schools were available at Sanguessa and Pamplona. Probably his education was conducted by tutors. At the *abbadia* no doubt he could have found a suitable instructor in Latin grammar and Christian doctrine. His mother's cousin, Martin de Azpilcueta, who was Francis's guardian and who had lived at Xavier castle since the death of John de Jassu in 1515, would have seen to it that the boy was thoroughly instructed.

This Don Martin was a jurist so celebrated that he was known later as the Doctor of Navarre—the definite article being an index to the prestige he enjoyed. How affectionate was the relationship between the two men is fully indicated by the letters Francis wrote to the Doctor years later when his cousin was a professor at the

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University of Coimbra and Francis a newly-fledged Jesuit.

It was probably because of Don Martin's advice that Francis chose to study at Paris rather than at Salamanca or Alcalá. But Francis could have needed little urging. Natural aptitude, added to a clear, cold calculation that the road to advancement in the world lay through study, egged him on. There may well have been, too, a glamorous attractiveness in the idea of seeing new countries, new people. Francis had been very closely cooped up for eighteen years, and was probably anxious to get away from his mother's apron-strings. The University of Paris, though no longer quite what it had been, still lived upon its reputation, and was regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of cosmopolitan learning. There he would meet Frenchmen, Italians, Flemings, Englishmen. Ideas were simmering in its lecture-rooms of which his mother knew nothing, and which, had she known of them, would most certainly have made her forbid her son to attend such a hot-bed of heresy. It was also about to boil with other ideas about which she (dying in 1529) was never to be aware, ideas that Francis had never bargained for. He had his life all planned : everything was to go according to schedule. And according to plan it went—though not precisely according to the plan decided upon. Ignatius changed all that. Yet to the end Francis was a perfect example of a man who thinks everything out and who leaves nothing to chance.

It could not have been merely because Francis wanted a comfortable position, of the kind that was open to well-

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educated young men of noble rank, that he went so far afield to obtain an education. He did indeed wish for such a position, and was in due course offered one, though when that happened he had embraced a new ideal. Francis, whatever his tangled motives may have been, went to Paris mainly because he had a distinterested love of scholarship. Caught at an impressionable age by an elder kinsman who was witty, kind, learned and charming, there is no wonder if he reached the conclusion that there could be no life so delightful as that spent in the company of well-bred scholars. The Renaissance had touched Spain.

He was sure of ecclesiastical advancement. An eventual bishopric could be almost counted upon ; there might even be a red hat. But study for its own sweet sake enticed him. His would be a life in which work was as pleasant as play. He might in his turn become another Doctor of Navarre, ripe in learning, virtuous without going to ascetic extremes, and sufficiently affluent. What more could one ask ? It is very much to the credit of Don Martin that, when Francis had thrown up all chance of ecclesiastical preferment, he approved his choice and even thought of going out to India with his cousin. Perhaps the Doctor was enough of a Basque (and a Christian) to see that self-sacrificing enthusiasm is something much better than scholarship, however mellow, and ease, however dignified. If it was he who pointed to Paris, he may have been wise enough (though great scholars are rarely wise) to perceive afterwards that Providence nearly always uses unexpected instruments.

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At all events, some time in September 1525,⁴ the Xaviers set aside from their greatly diminished income part of the money derived from a mill they owned at Burguete, and endowed with this Francis rode through the Pass of Roncesvalles on his way to Paris.

There is a point on that road where he reached a high plateau, with the peaks of the Pyrenees behind him. Quite suddenly there comes a sheer drop, and the fields and vineyards of France are outstretched before the traveller. Below was the little town of Saint Juan Pied-de-Port from which his father's family had come, and in which the house of the Jassus may still be seen. Confronted with this spectacle, Francis Xavier must have stood astonished, holding his breath. It could have been in no other spot that the poet of the *Chanson* imagined Roland dying, with his face turned towards *la douce France* and his gauntlet uplifted as that of a vassal to God. It was here that a new epic began.

⁴ The date established by Cros (*Doc. Nouv.*, p. 264).

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

HIS actual encounter with the University of Paris must at first have been something of a shock. Here was something quite different from the decorum, the stately etiquette, the rigid attention to the practices of religion to which he had been accustomed under his mother's roof. In leaving the little castle, the majestic line of the Pyrenees, and the winds salt from the sea, he had come into a world which was indeed new—as he had expected it to be—but in an altogether unexpected way. Huddled between the left bank of the Seine and the half-moon wall of Philippe Auguste were fifty or sixty colleges, together with a haphazard assortment of churches, hospitals, convents, lodging-houses, inns, and brothels. Many of the houses looked as slatternly and bedraggled as the impudent harridans within, but some of the colleges looked almost as disreputable, as dilapidated, and as dirty. Down each of the narrow streets ran the sewage stinking to high heaven, and the stench of the mud was hardly less nauseous—thick, gluey stuff that seemed to have sulphur as one of its ingredients. There was no escaping it, however closely the foot-travel-

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ler kept to the wall, for those on horseback splashed it freely on everybody else.

But there were few fine clothes in those streets to be ruined. In shabby gowns the students swarmed everywhere. Begrimed, unshaven, turbulent young ruffians they were in far too many instances, almost beyond control, despite the strict rules, and ready to stage a stone-throwing fight with men from another college on the slightest provocation. The university was so jealous of its privileges that the civil arm was virtually powerless to keep order.

Nor could the university authorities do much outside of the individual college. The election of the Rector was the traditional opportunity for a riot. In the year before Francis Xavier arrived in Paris, the students burst open the doors of the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre, where the election was taking place, and showed their disapproval of the new incumbent by hooting him and by smashing the stained-glass windows. Nothing much less like Oxford or Harvard can be imagined.

Unpleasing as this picture may be, there is ample evidence that it could hardly be overdrawn. Erasmus (who was at the Montaigu) exclaims, "How many rotten eggs I ate there! How much mouldy wine I drank!" and tells how the bedrooms that were near the lavatories were verminous and full of disease. And if we discount Erasmus, who was constitutionally inclined to grumble, we have similar accounts from Rabelais and Montaigne. There can be no doubt that the place was without every vestige of comfort, and equally without ordinary clean-

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liness. As far as their physical welfare was concerned, the lot of the students was little short of bestial.

St. Barbara's, where Francis was enrolled, was by comparison with some of the other colleges, fairly decent. It was one of the newest, and was accounted progressive. But it could hardly have escaped contamination from its proximity to less well-conducted institutions. It stood between the Rue des Chiens (where was the Montaigu) the Rue de Reims (with the college of the same name), and the Rue Jean-Lemaistre, with its Collège de Cholleys. Of these the Montaigu enjoyed the distinction of being the oldest, the most famous, the most gloomy, and the most dirty.

St. Barbara's had been founded by Geoffrey Lenormant in 1460. His purpose when giving a name to his foundation seems to have been to kill two birds with one stone by expressing his devotion to the saint, and by making a recondite joke. Those brought up on Scholastic logic have for centuries been taught five lines of Latin verse of which the first is :

Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferioque, prioris.

This is merely a mnemonic device, with the vowels of each word indicating one or other of the nineteen modes of the syllogism that are at once valid and of practical service. Every student of the time would have instantly caught the point about St. Barbara.

Francis had as room-mate a young shepherd from the hills of Savoy known as Peter Faber, who was destined to be the first of Ignatius's permanent disciples in Paris,

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and to be canonized as a saint. The furnishing of their room was far from luxurious, and their beds were only pallets laid on the bare floor. But Francis, though his means were meagre, felt that it was due to his status as a *hidalgo* to maintain a horse and a servant. Of this man we shall hear more later. He was Michael the Navarrese, an ill-conditioned fellow belonging to that body of extern students known as *martinets*—birds of passage.

There were many like him at the university, and they constituted one of the main problems for discipline, for they attended classes only when they felt so inclined, and were dissolute and riotous. As they rarely passed examinations, many of them stayed on at the university until they grew grizzled—mere hangers-on of the educational system, paying their way by doing odd jobs for the wealthier students.

In addition to the *martinets* there were the *bursars*, who had all their expenses paid by the college; the *cameristes*, who provided their own food but who lodged at the college; and the *cameristes-portionistes* who were boarded and lodged at their own expense. It was to this last class that Francis belonged.

The college rules were strict, at least on paper, for the ideal of monastic severity still prevailed. But if now and then the students suffered corporal punishment for some breach of discipline, this generally happened to those who neglected to take the usual precautions. A discreetly placed bribe would make the door-keepers turn a blind eye upon forbidden nocturnal excursions, or a deaf ear to a hilarious party in one of the rooms. What is more

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startling is to discover that there were professors who organized groups to visit disreputable taverns and houses of prostitution.

Francis had a professor of this type during his early days in Paris, and there is little wonder that a youth of nineteen, with all an adolescent's distaste for singularity, consented to accompany him. We have his own account of the matter as given twenty years later in India to Gaspar Coelho, the old priest at Mylapore. He confessed that he had managed to preserve his own chastity only because he had been struck with fear at having seen how often men had been brought down with loathsome disease as a consequence of their vice. The death of the scandalous professor himself gave a salutary warning. He was succeeded by John de Peña, a man of a very different type, against whom no objections can be brought except that he was somewhat straight-laced and lacking in imagination.

Despite so much that was shocking and disagreeable, there must have been enough intellectual life of a high order to induce a man of fine fastidiousness, such as Francis was, to put up with the discomfort and the dirt. Perhaps the intellectual excitements of the university were even more dangerous to him than the moral laxity. Lutheranism was in the air and was the subject of avid discussion, especially in Francis's own department of Arts. Jacques le Fevre d'Etaples (otherwise known as Faber Stapulensis) had been recently teaching at the Collège Lemoigne, where he had anticipated the teaching of the German heretics on several important points. It was

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evident that the ecclesiastical system needed reform — and to none was this more evident than to the more intelligent of the university men ; the only thing that was not quite obvious was where reform should be applied.

Had Ignatius Loyola not come to the university in 1528, Francis might have been affected by the same forces that influenced Calvin, who was then at the Montaigu across the street, and with whom he was probably acquainted.¹ There was a period when he was attracted by ideas which, being new, fascinated a young and eager mind ; but his upbringing was of the kind that would hardly have allowed him to be drawn into positive heresy. He was, however, in danger. Had Ignatius not come along just then, anything might have happened.

To the Xaviers far way in Spain there drifted, from what source we do not know, disquieting rumours about Francis. These were probably very vague, and more probably distorted, as such reports generally are. What the family got out of it was that he was keeping bad company, and they knew that he was living beyond his means. Had it not been for Magdalen, who was by now Abbess of the Poor Clares in Gandia, Francis would certainly have been called home for safe-keeping. But Magdalen, who one might have supposed would have been the most seriously alarmed of all the Xaviers, insisted that her brother be allowed to remain in Paris. She was inspired with an intuition that he was destined

¹ This is not a suggestion that Calvin might have influenced Xavier at this time. He was three years younger than Francis and was still apparently orthodox. But the temper of his mind was probably already un-Catholic, and he stands as an example of what Francis might have become.

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to do great things for God, and that he was to be equipped for them at the university. Had it not been for her decisive action at this crisis, the world would never have heard of Francis Xavier. He was therefore left in peace to follow the scholastic routine.

The day began at four o'clock with the harsh clanging of a bell. An hour later the students attended the first lecture, during which they sat on hay in summer and straw in winter, after which they attended Mass. Breakfast consisted of a roll, washed down, in the case of those who could afford it, with a little wine; and after breakfast there was an hour's recreation. From eight to ten there was another lecture, the main one of the schedule, and at eleven professors and pupils dined in common, at which time the Bible or the life of a saint was read aloud. The recreation afterwards, so Ribadeneira, the first biographer of Ignatius, tells us, was the reading of poetry and a discussion of the lectures.

From three to five the students were again in class. Supper was at six, followed by a survey of the day's work, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and bed. But it is certain that many students did not carry out this strict scheme with punctilious exactitude. Its severity was to some extent an incitement to high-spirited young men to kick over the traces.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, which were holidays, there were field sports in the wide meadow of Pré-aux-Clercs or the Ile-aux-Vaches, tennis, wrestling, fencing and cock-fighting. Though Francis found no opportunity to exhibit his skill at the Basque hand-ball, there are

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hints that he delighted in proving how swiftly he could run, how high and how far he could jump. These holidays often terminated in a free fight, which was what everybody enjoyed most.

In this way the years 1526-7 went swiftly by for Francis Xavier. He was probably a good student, though we know nothing except what we can infer from the fact that he eventually became a Master of Arts and a professor. But his temperament was not that of a scholar, and still less that of a literary man. His voluminous correspondence in later years shows that he never paid any attention to literary style and had no ambition to write for writing's sake. But he possessed one of the essential gifts of the born writer—he was always readable. The sonnet in Spanish which is attributed to him—and which has also been attributed to Ignatius and Teresa of Avila—is almost certainly not his.² Nature did not fit him for the study; and Grace, which builds upon natural gifts, had other designs for him. He was not destined to be another Doctor of Navarre. What the university did for him was to sharpen and strengthen a quick intelligence. It did not make him a man of profound learning, as it did Laynez and Salmeron.

The admirable Peter Faber, however, was a bookish man, and—more important for Francis—he was a natural saint, which again was what Francis was not. Despite their disparity in social rank, the Basque *hidalgo* and the Savoyard shepherd-boy, who was within a few days of

² Cf. E. Allison Peers for a discussion of this point (*Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, vol. I, pp. 202-3).

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his own age, formed a close friendship. They had this much in common—that the sweetness of their disposition was noticed by everybody.

It was lucky for Francis that he had Peter for his bosom friend, for it was Peter who prepared the way for Ignatius. Young Xavier's social position, his charm, his good looks, his vivacity, and the expensive clothes upon which he spent more than he could afford and which Michael the Navarrese kept well brushed for him—all these were dangers in the dissolute Latin Quarter. But Peter was by his side, Peter who had been from his youth of extraordinary piety, who at the age of twelve had taken a vow of perpetual chastity and begun to preach to the astonished peasants of his village. And though Peter possibly seemed in some people's eyes merely an obnoxiously pietistic youth, he was, as Francis soon discovered, thoroughly good all the way down. It was all the easier to pardon him for having taken his vow as a boy when one observed what difficulty he had in keeping it as a man—and how well he kept it. Peter, therefore, must be regarded as fulfilling almost the function of a guardian angel for Francis during the first two years at the university.

Then, sometime in February 1528, there limped into Paris a little man of thirty-seven in a dusty black robe. He drove before him a donkey laden with books and an unpublished manuscript. His arrival was momentous for Francis and Peter—as well as for many others.

Seven years before he had been wounded at the siege of Pamplona. The young officer was disgusted when,

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after the fractured bone in his leg had been set, a splinter protruded below the knee, involving permanent deformity. This would mean that he could never again wear the fashionable tightly-fitting high boots he loved to disport. Up to that time he had been able to make up to some extent for his lack of inches by a display of finery. He accordingly insisted that the splinter be sawn off.

The operation was exceedingly painful, but as he was still in the days of his worldly vanity, he submitted to it, and, when the operation turned out to be not wholly successful, to having his leg straightened and lengthened by means of an iron contrivance. Even so he limped a little for the rest of his life.

During his convalescence he asked for books to read, hoping that he would be lent some of the romances he relished. He was himself something of a poet and had written sonnets for a lady whose identity has never been clearly established but of whom we know this much—she was of royal blood. It was just like him to fall in love with the unattainable.

The books he obtained, the only books available, were a Life of Christ by Ludolph of Saxony and a collection of Lives of the Saints, the *Flos Sanctorum*. They were not at all what he wanted, but he resigned himself, and read what he had been given. As he read, the thought arose in him, "If Francis could do this, and Dominic that, why should not I do still more?" It was a crudely imperfect way of formulating what was to be the motto of the Society he founded—*For the greater glory of God*.

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This is not the place to retell the familiar story of Ignatius Loyola. But some of the things that happened to him cannot well be avoided in any account of Francis Xavier. There was a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Monserrat, after which he spent a year in the cave of Manresa, where he subdued himself by fierce asceticism and made the first draft of his famous Spiritual Exercises. Then there followed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and an unsuccessful attempt to convert the followers of the Prophet. Upon returning to Spain he took stock of himself and came to see that if he was to accomplish anything solid he had to get an education. For it is not necessary to be more than half-educated to write lyric poetry.

Though well over thirty, he dourly sat down with young boys to learn Latin grammar, finding it hard to study but by force of sheer application driving the matter somehow into his head. As he had a way of talking to people about God he was suspected of being "queer," of being a heretic; he was even suspected of being a saint.

Spain getting a little too hot for him, he went on to Paris, where he registered as a student at the Montaigu. Here he found under the same roof with him a sharp-featured, sour and brilliant man whose name was John Calvin. The two students must have met, but Calvin was about to leave at the time Loyola entered, and we have no record of any meeting. Though Calvin inserted in his *Institutes* a far from complimentary criticism of the still more famous Exercises, he makes no mention of

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a personal acquaintance with the most redoubtable of his antagonists.

It was providential, as Father Coleridge points out, that Ignatius formed the nucleus of his Society at Paris rather than at Salamanca. For though the first disciples were Spaniards, their Parisian experience freed them from a too exclusively Spanish point of view : they learned to be Europeans in that microcosm of the world.

Another point should be noticed. Ignatius was instinctively led to work in great centres of population. As the Latin distich puts it, "Bernard loves valleys, Benedict mountainis, Francis towns, but Ignatius large cities."³ It is still broadly true.

The first disciples at Paris, however, soon fell off. These were John de Castro, Peralta, and Amadores, all of them students at St. Barbara's, to which college Ignatius transferred from the Montaigu in October 1529. Here he roomed with Peter and Francis, and as John de Peña also shared their quarters they must have been very crowded for space. But comfort was not what one looked for at the University of Paris.

Francis good-naturedly undertook the task of coaching the backward, middle-aged student, but he soon found this uncongenial. The man seemed to him stupid, and as patience was not one of Francis's natural gifts, he passed on the coaching to Peter Faber. But the *hidalgo* condescended to borrow money from the "Pilgrim," who obtained it by begging during vacations in the Low Coun-

³ *Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat,
Oppida Franciscus, magnas Ignatius urbes.*

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tries and England. No doubt Francis felt that he had well earned what he got.

If there was no immediate sympathy between Francis and Ignatius, Peter was instantly captivated. A long time was to elapse before Francis was to be enveloped in the Ignatian toils. He was on the point of taking his final examinations, which he passed, together with Faber, on March 15, 1530, soon afterwards being appointed professor of Philosophy at the Collège Dormans-Beauvais. It was the first stepping-stone to the advancement he had long dreamed, and he had no intention of being turned aside by a limping little enthusiast.

At night, however, the friends would talk in the bare, stuffy room lit by candles ; and always Ignatius would put, sooner or later, the quiet question, "What shall it profit a man, Don Francisco, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?" Francis at first was rather amused and turned the thing off with a jest. Then the persistence became irritating. After all, he was not trying to gain the whole world but only a snug benefice in Pamplona. He had every intention of being a good Christian, and in due time of becoming a priest. Surely one could save one's soul without becoming a disciple of Ignatius Loyola !

Nevertheless the words sank in. If this was really a call from God, Francis could neglect it only at his extreme peril. There was fire smouldering in the eyes of Ignatius. Perhaps their vision was keener than his own. Other men might sink into comfortable jobs without danger to their souls. But to one who was beginning to

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feel a divine disquiet, comfort no longer seemed very attractive. All the same Francis stubbornly refused to yield. Ignatius had to steel himself in patience. He knew that in Francis there was just the sort of material that God needed for a great work. Profiting by his disappointment with earlier disciples, he was careful not to put on too much pressure. He watched Francis, and he waited.

Ignatius was lying under suspicion with the Inquisition, and it was whispered that in Spain he had been in similar trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities. His methods seemed very irregular, and his devotional practices to have about them a tinge of quackery. Nobody had anything definite against him, but a good many people were eyeing the "Pilgrim" narrowly and were waiting for him to do or say something upon which they could seize. He was a strange figure, and one might have thought him insane had it not been for his slow, dull mind. Yet he had written a mysterious book—mysterious as was everything else about him—a book that nobody had ever read. How a man with his lack of learning had managed this feat was a standing puzzle.

In the eyes of the college authorities Ignatius was making himself a good deal of a nuisance. It was all very well for him to get together groups of students for frequent confession and communion at the Carthusians (though in those days, it should be remembered, most Catholics thought it showy to perform more than their Easter duties), but this eccentric was interfering with the

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college curriculum. Peña, who from close quarters saw what was going on, by no means approved. It was turning the whole place upside down. To be so extravagantly devout, he thought, was not quite healthy.

The climax was reached when Ignatius nursed a man who had contracted the plague, and then came back to St. Barbara's with the high possibility of infecting everybody there. Peña shared a room with Ignatius, and shuddered at the thought of his own danger. He rushed off, fussy and fuming, to report the matter to the Rector, James Govea.

What would happen today of course would be that Ignatius (along with Francis and Peter and Peña) would have been instantly clapped into quarantine. Instead Govea announced that Ignatius should be taught a lesson by having inflicted upon him the punishment of *la Salle* the next day after dinner. This consisted in running the gauntlet, stripped to the waist, between two lines of professors and students, each armed with a whip or stick. It was announced in advance, so that everybody could come armed.

That the culprit was now nearly forty was, so far from being an excuse, an aggravation of the offence : he ought to know better at his age. Accordingly the lines were drawn up after dinner, and among those waiting to lay the lash on the back of Ignatius was a young Scot who was teaching Latin at St. Barbara's, and who was afterwards to become one of John Knox's associates and a bitter enemy of Mary Queen of Scots. This was George Buchanan, the Latin poet. One can imagine with what

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grim humour he used to regale his Presbyterian friends in later years with an account of the incident.

It must have been to him a great regret that he never, after all—though he had such a stout cudgel in his hands—got the chance of thrashing the founder of the Jesuits. For just then a most surprising thing happened : the door opened, and Ignatius and the Rector came into the refectory arm-in-arm.

What had taken place in the Rector's room is not quite clear. But Ignatius must have gone to Govea and explained exactly what had happened ; and Govea was wise enough to take a more lenient view of the matter than Peña's. The pious embellishments of the early biographers may be discounted. Govea is supposed to have fallen on his knees before Ignatius asking his pardon. Pardon for what ? Under the circumstances that would have been ridiculous. At any rate Govea was ever afterwards a firm supporter of Ignatius ; it was he who was instrumental in getting Jesuit missionaries for India.

If Ignatius narrowly escaped a public flogging, he also narrowly escaped something worse. Michael the Navarrese had no special objection to Ignatius's making disciples, or his taking them to frequent communion, or even to his visiting the plague-stricken, so long as he left Francis alone. He was proud of his master, and he loved him ; and here was this crack-brained "Pilgrim"—a man whose orthodoxy was dubious, too!—trying to turn him aside from the brilliant career just about to open for him. If the Inquisition would do nothing about it, if Govea was so weak as to condone

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Ignatius—Michael would have to take it upon himself to act. Hiding a dagger under his cloak, he hung around one night waiting for Ignatius.

The early biographers tell us that he heard a voice telling him not to do his murderous deed—and this just at the moment when he was about to drive the blade home. It may have come from heaven, as they suggest; more probably it was the poor wretch's conscience. There was some good in Michael. He had a dog-like devotion to Francis. But he was possessed by wild jealousy, and later he showed himself to be a treacherous and incorrigible liar. It is in part amusing, and in part pathetic, to recall that he tried to gain admission to the embryo Society. He was, it would seem, the first candidate to be rejected.

It is obvious enough why Ignatius would have nothing to do with Michael the Navarrese. But one's imagination is excited by the thought that something might have been accomplished with Calvin and Buchanan. St. John Calvin, St. George Buchanan—it is a beguiling fancy! Calvin was probably beyond his reach, being on the point of leaving Paris to study law at Orleans when Ignatius enrolled at the Montaigu.⁴ And Buchanan was a minor professor when Ignatius entered St. Barbara's as an elderly and backward student. Such students were common enough—but they were generally *martinets*, and were not well thought of. The Scots are a touchy race, and

⁴ He was back in Paris again for a few months during 1531-2 at the Collège Fortet, and again in 1533, but by this time he had become definitely heretical and frequented circles very different from those in which Ignatius and his friends were to be found.

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if Ignatius made any advances they were probably coolly received. As we know nothing, we can only speculate. It would seem, however, that at this time Buchanan was just the sort of man Ignatius needed—brilliant, learned, dissatisfied (as many intelligent men were) with conditions in the Church, but eager to do what he could in Christ's service. Yet we need not try to be wiser than Ignatius. It may well have been that he saw in both men the poisonous root of spiritual pride, and knew that their case was hopeless. A simpler explanation is that he did not know them very well (this was certainly true of Calvin), and that he saw no way of reaching them.

The Ignatian method demanded immense patience. The captain of Pamplona settled down to capture a Basque fortress, and soon saw that it was going to be a long siege. There was to be no rush, no attempt to carry the stronghold by assault. Ignatius, like God, could wait.

Though it was possible to resist the influence of Ignatius, it was impossible not to feel it. As M. Bellesort puts it, the fact that Francis held out for three or four years is the measure of his powers of resistance.⁵ Years afterwards, when Benedict Palmio set down his memories of his talks with Ignatius, he recorded that the great sculptor of men had said that the hardest block he ever encountered was, at least in the beginning, young Francis Xavier. He might have added that the hardest block to the chisel is also the hardest block to the weather.

⁵ Page 39.

CHAPTER III

THE IGNATIAN IDEA

WHEN IGNATIUS LOYOLA retired to the little cave of Manresa his mind was not occupied with the idea of founding a religious order. He was concerned with only one thing : putting himself into good spiritual condition. This took time, much longer than he expected. It was a year before he was ready to emerge.

The method he employed was that of ascetic discipline and prayer. The asceticism was part of the tradition he inherited. He afterwards confessed that he had carried his harsh treatment of the body too far. Certainly exterior forms of asceticism have never been a feature of Jesuit spirituality, though of course Jesuits, like all Christians, need to practice some sort of interior mortification.

Much more important was his systematising of that form of prayer known as meditation. This was embodied in his Spiritual Exercises, of which he made the first draft at Manresa and upon which he worked off and on for the rest of his life. His deepening psychological insight made constant modification and revision desirable. Yet the main lines of the Exercises were clear from the start.

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He always obliged his disciples to undergo the discipline of this series of meditations, for he had tested that discipline upon himself and knew its value. But he did not leave Manresa with a definite mission — not even with the mission of gathering a group of disciples, not even with the mission of giving the Exercises.

His concept of that mission took shape only very slowly. Between his conversion and his ordination to the priesthood, sixteen years were to pass. And not until after another two years had elapsed was it at last decided to establish the Society of Jesus. Nevertheless the Society was from the time of Manresa implied and incipient in everything he did.

Ignatius's primary object was simply that of saving his soul. But after he had, by co-operation with God, thoroughly transformed his own character, he tried to save the souls of others. It so happened, because he spent a number of years at school and college, that his first disciples were students. He began, however, as we have seen, with the Mohammedans, and was not at all successful in their case. Even after he had gathered a university group around him, there was no intention of founding a college, or of making teaching his main work. That (like other things) came later and was dictated by circumstances. The immediate object of the original group of Jesuits, to which they bound themselves by vow, was a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with of course the intention of making another assault upon Islam.

What it is important to note is that, when the Society was actually formed, it was designed upon an entirely

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new plan. It was to be the kind of religious order needed for a rapidly changing world.

The basic type of religious order is that of monasticism, and the Benedictine Rule is its norm. This rule, as Abbot Butler has shown in his magnificent book, is one of great flexibility and may be adapted and interpreted in various ways. Thus the Benedictine life as lived at Downside is, so far as external observances are concerned, not very like the Benedictinism of the sixth century. But fundamentally it is the same, being based upon frugality rather than austerity, and calls for a secure and permanent home where God may be served by work and by prayer.

The work may be of almost any kind, from agriculture to education. But the *Opus Dei* is invariable, and consists of the solemn and careful chanting in choir of the Office of the Church. Monasticism has been many times reformed—for it is always in danger of growing somewhat lax—but, whatever strictness was added to the moderate demands of Benedict, the permanent home, the paternal rule of the abbot, the chanting of the Office—these remain essential features.

Monks have now and then in the past done heroic missionary work among the still pagan nations of Europe. This, however, was only because of the demands of urgent necessity. As soon as Europe had become Christendom, the monks retired with a sigh of relief to their cloisters, leaving the management of parochial work to the secular clergy.

But as time went on, need was perceived for a new

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type of religious order. The secular clergy were confined to their parishes, and were at certain periods of a low intellectual and moral grade. The monks, too, in many instances were softened by luxury. To meet the new conditions the several orders of friars were founded—the chief of these, the Dominicans and Franciscans, in the early thirteenth century.

The difference between friars and monks is this: though the friars were bound, as strictly as monks, to the choral saying of the Office, they were not attached so firmly to the monastic home. A Benedictine normally lived for the whole of his life in his abbey. This was an independent, self-contained, and often very large community. It was usually situated on a mountain or in a valley far from a town. The monks preferred retirement.

Friars on the other hand lived in smaller groups, in less substantial houses, and went to seek people out. They preferred to settle in towns. Though their primitive practice of begging their bread did not last long—for this soon became unnecessary—they nevertheless more strictly interpreted the vow of poverty than did the monks among whom, though the individual owned nothing, the community frequently owned a great deal. It was here that the spiritual danger of monasticism lay. Some abbeys grew enormously wealthy; and though the choral Office was kept up, there was no longer any need for monks to work. Sloth sapped their vitality.

As time went on the friars tended to resemble monks. They had, it is true, a definite work to do, generally that of preaching. They still went among the people, but

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unfortunately they did not always give edification. A friary sometimes expanded until it was almost as large as an abbey, and approximated an abbey in wealth. Fervour was dead : the salt had lost its savour.

Corruption began to appear, and however grossly this has been exaggerated, and though it is true that the vast majority of monks and friars were good men in their way, the ideal of positive holiness was neglected. Slackness overtook them. They were no longer functioning as their founders had intended.

When things went too far there were reforms, which were sometimes drastic ; but it seemed impossible to recover the lost ground, or the prestige (and, for that reason, the influence) the monks and friars had once possessed.

What Ignatius did, in collaboration with his colleagues, was to invent a new type of spiritual instrument, one that, broadly speaking, has been the model for the orders subsequently founded. The Jesuit was freed from the necessity of saying the Office in choir — a startling innovation. He had merely to recite his Breviary privately, as a secular priest does, at times most convenient to the individual. At once there was a tremendous saving of time, though this was not the object aimed at. The Jesuit was to be a free-lance, unattached, ready to go alone or with a group of Jesuits anywhere, and to do any work to which he was assigned. Choir obligations would only hamper him in his work.

A boy entering a Benedictine novitiate knows from the first day what his life is going to be until his death. The

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young Jesuit knows only what his life is going to be up to the time he is ready for active work. He knows that he will have a two-year novitiate, then five years of the Humanities and of Philosophy in the houses of studies of his Province. After that he will be sent out to teach for a couple of years in a Jesuit school, before going back to a house of studies for four years of theology. Upon the completion of his theological studies he devotes a year to the study of asceticism, a year known as his period of tertianship, because it is really a third year during which he devotes himself to prayer and meditation. Only at the end of this long period does he complete his training. It thus takes about fourteen years to make a full-fledged Jesuit. But he never has an idea about what work will eventually be given him to do, or any voice in the matter. He has to be ready to go anywhere at an hour's notice.

Obedience, as understood in other religious orders, does not have this military quality. An abbot's powers over his subject are definitely limited. For though the abbot may give any work within the house according to his discretion, he cannot send one of his monks on a foreign mission, or even assign him to parish duties within his own country—if the monk does not choose to go.

The same thing is in the main true of the friars, though it should be said that the increasing complexity of ecclesiastical organization has tended more and more to centralize everything. The mobility of the Jesuits—which is so largely the result of the military discipline given them by Captain Loyola—has provided a model that the older

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orders have shown a disposition to imitate, though they try at the same time to foster their individual characteristics, and though they perceive that the Jesuit system—like all systems—has its drawbacks.

In forging his sword, Ignatius made it as sharp as possible, but he had no idea how far it was to reach. The Society was to be limited to sixty members. It now numbers about twenty-five thousand. And the multifariousness of their occupations would have startled Ignatius could he have foreseen it.

A popular misapprehension should be corrected. One often hears it said that the main purpose of Ignatius in founding his Society was to combat heresy. Much more truly could this be said of Dominic, who began his distinctive work of preaching because of the challenge of rampant Albigensianism. It is not at all true of Ignatius.

On the contrary, the work of extirpating heresy in the sixteenth century was being done, and in Spain in an especially ruthless fashion, by the Inquisition. Ignatius probably had never so much as heard of Lutheranism until he went to the University of Paris. And he went there only because he was aware that he needed an education in order to do solid work. The Jesuits did, indeed, have a great deal to do with repelling Protestantism, but they certainly were not established for that purpose, and it was never anything except one among their many activities.

The truth of the matter is rather this: long before Luther had raised the standard of revolt in Germany the very necessary Catholic reform of the Church had already

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begun — conspicuously so in Spain. It manifested itself in two main modes : that of the drastic repression of those who, after having accepted baptism, had secretly reverted to the practice of the rites of Israel or Islam, and that of a luxuriant mystical florescence. We may take Cardinal Ximenes (along with Isabella the Catholic) as exemplifying the active mode, and Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross as exemplifying (a little later) the other. But both things sprang from the same root — a passionate hunger for reform, for Christian perfection.

Whatever horror the methods of the Spanish Inquisition may excite in modern minds — and the Pope himself regarded them as excessive — it should in bare justice be remembered that the Inquisition was the first, and an absolutely essential, movement in the direction of purging the Church.

A further purging was necessary. There were notorious ecclesiastical scandals and abuses of many kinds, and these were very disturbing to every intelligent and pious mind. The difficulty was to know how to begin to bring about a better state of affairs. Erasmus with his satire attempted one method. But satire proved much less effective than sanctity, *The Praise of Folly* than the Spiritual Exercises and *The Interior Castle*.

The difference between the Catholic and the Protestant reformers is this : the Catholics accepted the task, a very difficult one, of purifying conditions in the Church ; the Protestants, being hot-headed men in a hurry, went on from denouncing ecclesiastical corruption (in which matter they were doing what was not only permissible but

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laudable) to the altogether too simple solution of repudiating Catholic doctrine. The true reformers therefore were really all on the Catholic side ; the Protestants were merely those in revolt.

The term Counter-Reformation is for this reason somewhat misleading. Though it crowned its work at the Council of Trent, it began long before the so-called Protestant Reformation. The founding of the Society of Jesus was accordingly part of the Catholic Reformation (as it should be called), and as such the Society found itself involved in resisting the disruptive work of the Lutheran and Calvinist heretics. Nevertheless it was not founded with that as even a secondary object.

There is a further misapprehension about Ignatius, with regard to his Spiritual Exercises. It is often supposed that they aimed at making Jesuits efficient. This would be perfectly correct—or at any rate correct up to a certain point—if said of the long and intensive training to which the Society subjects its members, but not at all correct if said about the making of the Exercises. The proof of this is easy. After Ignatius had undergone the year of prayer and meditation in Manresa which resulted in his famous book, he was fully aware that he was still far from “efficient.” It was to become efficient that he went to a couple of Spanish universities and afterwards to Paris. It was through secular education, completed by a thorough course in theology, that Ignatius equipped himself ; and it is through education that all his followers have been equipped.

Practically every Jesuit has made the Exercises before

being admitted to the Society, for they are intended as a test of vocation. Yet they are not intended only for Jesuits, and from Ignatius's day to our own they have frequently been given to all sorts and conditions of men and women. But because to make the Exercises in full demands a whole month, free of all other preoccupations, they normally have to be drastically abbreviated for the accommodation of those who are not Jesuits.

The Spiritual Exercises is not a book for casual reading, as everyone has discovered who has opened its pages. It is completely devoid of literary charm, and is about as unlike such a work as *The Imitation of Christ* as anything could be. Yet the purpose of both works is the same—that of bringing souls closer to God.

The Exercises therefore are nothing without someone to give them, and he should be a priest. This, though Ignatius was a layman when he wrote them (and was to remain without Sacred Orders for another fifteen years), and though, while not yet a priest, he gave them to a number of laymen and at least one priest—Peter Faber.

But though a priest should direct, Ignatius left him very little of a free hand in the matter. Every point is separated distinctly from all the others, and is stated in the most cut-and-dried scientific fashion. The Exercises therefore cannot be called a text-book of the spiritual life; it is rather a manual by means of which, with supreme psychological insight, the spiritual life is repaired and ultimately transformed. Ignatius had such

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confidence in their efficacy that, in cases where they failed, he always attributed the failure to the manner of giving them and not to the Exercises themselves.

Though Ignatius gave the Exercises to laymen or priests who he knew would not or could not join the Society, they nevertheless had a special importance in relation to those whom he hoped to secure. Then he would bide his time, for if taken too soon they might be ineffectual, or less effectual than they should be.

This was probably the reason for an exception being made in the case of Francis Xavier, who did not make the Exercises until the end of August 1534, after he and the first Companions had taken their vows at Montmartre. It may have been due to the fact that Francis could not conveniently set aside a month while teaching philosophy at the Collège Dormans-Beauvais. But the likelier explanation is that Francis's professorial duties merely provided a convenient excuse for Ignatius's deferring the crucial test. He would run no risks with a man who had given him so much thought as Francis.

The long-sought conversion occurred in 1534, probably during the spring, at a time when Peter Faber was home in Savoy on a visit to his family. Ignatius at last had Francis to himself, and he saw that now or never the thing had to happen. For several years he had been working on him, without apparent success; now he girded himself for the supreme effort and won him.

We do not know how this was brought about. But it is worth mentioning—as something that may have

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more bearing upon the matter than is supposed—that on January 20, 1533,¹ Francis's sister Magdalen died at Gandia. Her death was in the true Xaverian style. Another nun was dying beside her in frightful agony, so Magdalen asked God to let her have the sufferings instead. It was found, after her death, that the smile upon the face of the Abbess was a holy subterfuge. She had bitten her tongue in pieces in her determination not to let anyone know in what torments she was dying. This was the sister who had prophesied seven or eight years previously that Francis was destined to do a great work for God. It is impermissible that a historian should affirm that her prayers effected her brother's conversion; it is impossible that a Christian should doubt it.

What were the arguments Ignatius employed to supplement his prayers? Again we do not know. But M. Bellesort offers a suggestion which is highly plausible—for it certainly is quite in line with the Ignatian psychological method—that during their long talks at night Ignatius made no attempt to prove that Francis was too ambitious, but rather that he was not ambitious enough, that he would never be satisfied with the mediocre object upon which he had set his heart. All he did therefore was to replace one object with another.² However that may be, we know that Peter returned to find his friend like a bird in the hand of the fowler.

On August 15, 1534, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, four men joined the three who lived

¹ Cf. Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, p. 314.

² Cf. pp. 40-1.

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together at St. Barbara's. These four were Salmeron, a Toledan, only eighteen ; Laynez of Castille, twenty-two (he was to be the second General of the Society and, with Salmeron, a mighty force at the Council of Trent) ; Nicholas (commonly known as Bobadilla), twenty-seven, another Spaniard ; and the Portuguese, Simon Rodriguez, who was also twenty-seven. These with the two Basques, Loyola and Xavier, and Faber, the only member of the group who came from beyond the Iberian peninsula and the only priest among them, formed themselves into one of the strangest processions that even Paris has seen.

They went down from the college by the Rue St. Jacques to the Rue St. Martin, crossed by the bridge to the *Cité* and then by the other bridge to the right bank of the Seine. The hill of Montmartre, whose gypsum quarries they could already see, was their goal. They were making for the dilapidated little church belonging to the Benedictine nuns which was on the summit.

The under-sacristan, Mother Perrette Rouillard, who lived to be nearly a hundred, and who to the day of her death was fond of telling all about it, was waiting for them by appointment, and she handed Ignatius the keys to the crypt.

Peter Faber, only recently ordained, said Mass. At its conclusion, the other six men, all of them still laymen, with burning or brimming eyes went up and knelt before the altar for Communion. As Faber passed down the line, each of them, Loyola, Xavier, Rodriguez, Bobadilla, Laynez, and Salmeron, before receiving the Host,

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pronounced an agreed-upon vow : they would preserve perpetual chastity and poverty and they would go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Then Faber, who had already communicated, stood facing them at the side of the altar with the Host in his right hand and the ciborium in his left, and in a level voice he took the same vow. No mention was made of obedience, for the good reason that there was no superior as yet, nor was there to be for some time. But every man there recognized that Loyola was the Captain of their Company.

To none of them was he in stronger contrast than to Xavier, though both were nobles of the Basque blood. This was apparent even at the first glance—for one was small, slightly crippled, and already ageing ; the other was a tall young athlete. Their mental make-up was discovered, by those who knew them, to be more dissimilar than their physical appearance. Ignatius was slow of thought, a methodical worker, in contrast to Francis, who was compounded of fire and mercury ; it was he who had to give Francis the necessary ballast. Yet, as events were to prove, hardly less than Ignatius was Francis a man of clear foresight, of carefully prepared plans. There were several men there who were far cleverer and more charming than Ignatius. But he was the man of iron, the master of them all.

As it was a Feast Day, there was no need to hasten back to the university. They therefore breakfasted on Montmartre by the little spring which is reputed to have been the scene of the martyrdom of St. Denis. The rest of the

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day was spent in conversation : they had much to talk about—more than they imagined.

They did not yet think of themselves as a religious order. That idea was not to suggest itself to their minds, in any definite form, until more than a year later. And it was still later that they received approval from the Pope. But for all practical purposes the Feast of the Assumption 1534 must be considered as the birthday of the Society of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

ITALY AND PRIESTHOOD

IN SEPTEMBER 1534 Ignatius Loyola gave the Exercises to Francis Xavier, after which the young professor returned to his teaching at the Collège Dormans-Beauvais. But it was with great reluctance—for once he had thrown in his lot with Ignatius, all his old mode of life lacked savour. As Père Brou puts it : “Francis came out of the Exercises changed and another man. From now on, it is the life of a saint that we write.”¹

There was nothing else at the moment for him to do but teach. Some members of the group were not ready to leave the university, so it was decided to defer until 1537 the fulfilment of their vow of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, which falls on January 25th, was selected as the most appropriate date on which to sail from Venice.

Meanwhile Ignatius put his disciples under the charge of Peter Faber, while he went off alone for a visit to Spain. Before leaving he took care to satisfy the Inquisition at Paris about the devotional practices of his

¹ Vol. I, p. 45.

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Companions, and was given a signed certificate of innocence. He thought he might need to produce this in Spain.

Along with this document he carried with him a letter from Francis to his brother John, the Captain of Azpilcueta. This is the first of the extant letters.

Francis's main purpose in writing seems to have been to clear Ignatius and himself from certain slanders that had been brought against them. What these slanders were we do not precisely know ; they evidently had nothing to do with his moral conduct but with his having frequented the company of those who (as he puts it) outwardly seemed to be good but within were full of heresy. He flames out in very pardonable anger against his accusers—members of that base tribe of anonymous letter-writers : "How I wish I could pay them their deserts !"

As for Ignatius, Francis tells John that any evil report he may have heard is false. Ignatius will inform him about the heretics, for it is Ignatius who saved him from his former associates. Ignatius therefore is to be believed as though he were Francis speaking. It would seem from all this that Francis's new friends had been indiscriminately lumped together with his first acquaintances in Paris as people of doubtful orthodoxy.

While Ignatius was away, there came to Francis that offer of a comfortable ecclesiastical benefice which was now his discarded ambition. When we recall the dates connected with this bit of business, it seems safe to infer that the visit of Ignatius to the Captain of Azpilcueta was

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the unintentional cause of bringing the matter to a head.

We have already seen that Francis passed his final examinations for his Master's degree on March 15, 1530, and that he was immediately appointed to a teaching position. It is evident, however, that he had no intention of teaching for the rest of his life, because on February 13, 1531, he had taken the first steps towards obtaining, through his brothers in Navarre, the certificate of nobility which was necessary before he could secure the benefice he had in mind.

Nothing was done about the matter by the dilatory brothers who, no doubt, thought there was nothing pressing about it. Francis was teaching in Paris and seemed happy there, and possibly the right kind of vacancy at Pamplona was not just at the moment available. Whatever may have been the reason, no great effort was made to conclude the affair until September 1535.

The letter from Francis to his brother John was dated March 25, 1535. The sudden activity of the Captain of Azpilcueta came soon after he had received a visit from Ignatius, and must have occurred because of that visit. What other conclusion can be drawn except that when Ignatius told the Xavier family what it was that Francis proposed to do with his life, they promptly set to work to prevent his connexion with so hare-brained a scheme? They knew Francis well enough not to attempt to turn him aside by argument; they therefore did the practical and sensible thing of getting him tied to a comfortable job.

Another point arises here: why did Francis, after put-

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ting the wheels in operation that were to secure his canonry, do nothing to keep them going? It could hardly have been because he was uncertain whether or not he wanted to remain in Paris, for he had already been a professor for a year when he made his application, and by that time he knew what to expect of a teacher's life. We should have expected him to have kept prodding his brothers until they bestirred themselves, had he really been yearning to exchange a Master's chair for a stall in Pamplona cathedral. That he did nothing further seems to indicate that he was undecided and was willing to allow things to drift, so as not to be obliged irrevocably to commit himself. One may surmise that his indecision arose not so much because he was hesitating between a professorship and a canonry, but rather because he had long felt in his bones that he would ultimately throw in his lot with Ignatius. That he stubbornly resisted three years before he did so, indicates how reluctant he was to make the final surrender.

Even after the brothers had acted in September, legal formalities still had to be complied with. The certificate of nobility was attached to the door of the cathedral in order that any possible flaws in so important a document might be discovered. Then there was a further delay until August 4th of the following year when in the name of Charles V the *corte-mayor* of Pamplona affixed his signature, and Don Francisco Xavier y Jassu was declared of the rank of a *hidalgo*, a legitimate descendant of four grandparents all of noble blood.² In Spain they were

² Brou, vol. 1, p. 49.

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very punctilious about such matters. So also were the canons of Pamplona.

All this came too late to have any effect upon the career of Francis. Had he been immediately appointed to a stall in the cathedral, it would still have been too late. As it happened, however—probably because there was no immediate vacancy—it was not until October 1536 that the Chapter elected him one of its members.

A courier was at once despatched to Paris with the good news. When he arrived he found the newly-elected canon on the point of leaving for Venice with his raggletaggle companions. The old ambition was no longer a temptation to him. He had a new ambition now.

Three other men had joined the group—a Provençal, Codure, Broët, a Picard, and another Savoyard, Le Jay. These, together with Xavier, Rodriguez, Bobadilla, Salmeron and Laynez set out under Faber for Italy.

They travelled as poor pilgrims, dressed in shabby black gowns, and wearing wide-brimmed hats. Each had a staff in his hand. A knapsack for papers—these presumably their lecture notes—and a rosary worn round the neck completed their equipment. The rosary was conspicuously displayed to indicate that they were Catholics. Part of their journey lay through country occupied by heretics.

Upon arriving at an inn, as upon leaving it, they knelt to pray. Every morning they heard Mass and received Communion. And on the march they divided their time between pious conversation and the singing of hymns. If this mode of travelling will not seem particularly at-

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tractive to most people, it must be remembered that these men were saints not *wandervöglén*. Never was a group so radiantly happy, whatever the weather or the difficulties of travel.

It is, however, a little difficult for even the most sympathetic modern reader to hear with patience of one thing that (according to Tursellinus) took place on this journey, but (according to Rodriguez) while Francis was making the Exercises.⁸ It will be remembered that Francis had been exceedingly vain of his athletic prowess. As a mortification he now tied cords around his arms and legs, so tightly that they became embedded in the festering flesh. When his friends tried to extract the cords, they were unable to do so, and for two days Francis lay in great pain and in danger of death. All that his companions could do for him was to pray ; but after a period of rest, during which Francis did not move his limbs, the swelling subsided and the cords were removed. Even Rodriguez reproves the lack of prudence. A good result nevertheless came of this piece of ascetic excess : Francis never again attempted any such absurdity.

Because the Emperor was at war with the French, and because six of the group were his subjects, they decided to take the northern route, so as to get as speedily as possible into German territory, from which they meant to pass into Switzerland. Even so they ran some danger. For the roads were full of the badly disciplined ruffians

⁸ Rodriguez, as a companion of Francis, would seem to be the more reliable witness. But the later date given by Tursellinus would seem to be the more probable. There can be no doubt about the incident itself, though it may have been exaggerated.

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who made up the soldiery of the times. The pilgrims therefore decided that, in the event of their being stopped by Frenchmen, the Frenchmen among them would explain that they were on their way to the shrine of St. Nicholas near Nancy ; but in the Emperor's territories the Spaniards would be the spokesmen and say that they were on their way to visit the Holy House at Loretto. They did, in point of fact, propose to visit both shrines.

They crossed the frontier near Verdun, and in Germany found themselves among rabid Lutherans. When it was perceived from their rosaries that they were Catholics, the local pastor would be summoned by the people to confute them. The fact that he proved no match for these learned men only added to the pilgrims' difficulties. The discomfited village theologian, smarting under defeat, told his flock that these were very bad men to whom nobody should give a lodging. Stones were sometimes thrown at them as they left.

The gross joviality of one pastor was hardly less distressing to them. He invited them to have dinner with him, and attempted a joke at which he laughed uproariously. Would they not like to see his books and his children, *libros et liberos*? When the leering invitation of the apostate priest was politely refused, of course offence was taken.

Here and there, however, they encountered a Catholic. At Constance an old woman who had preserved the Faith among her heretical neighbors, noticed with joy that they were wearing beads, so brought out a crucifix

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she had hidden and was overcome with joy when she saw them kneel in the snow to kiss it.

The mid-winter cold of Switzerland was intense, but their hearts were warmed so well with an interior fire that in their exalted mood nothing troubled them. They were to meet Ignatius, and then fulfil their vow by taking boat at Venice for the Holy Land. That expectation upheld them through all their trials.

Soon they were again in a Catholic district, passing through Trent (little suspecting what triumphs were to be won by Laynez and Salmeron at its Council), through Verona, and then straight on to Venice. There on January 8, 1537, they found Ignatius waiting for them.

But instead of their sailing, as they had intended, on the 25th, it was decided that they would do well to go to Rome first in order to obtain the blessing of the Pope, Paul III. Ignatius would not go with them because he had incurred, or imagined he had incurred, the enmity of Cardinal Caraffa. His presence among them would not be tactful or politic. Moreover Peter Ortiz was in Rome, where, as the Ambassador of the Emperor, he had a good deal of influence, and it was Ortiz who had denounced Ignatius to the Inquisition in Paris. The Companions would be more likely to be well received if a leader who lay under suspicion stayed away.

Though it was not until March that they left for Rome, they were far from idle in the meanwhile. In that splendid city of marble and gold there was misery, so they at once set to work in the public hospitals. Venus the

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punsters might call it, and there Titian's canvases made an apotheosis of the flesh ; but even there the flesh rotted and stank in its corruption.

Nothing was too hard for them. They scrubbed the floors, emptied the slops, washed the foul bodies of the sick, prayed for the dying, and buried the dead. There was no hour of the day or night when they were not at the beck and call of anyone who needed them. It was because of this experience that Ignatius required his novices to spend some part of their time among the sick.

An incident related of Francis is very typical of him. Finding the stench of the place and the sight of so many putrescent bodies too much for his fine fastidiousness, he forced himself to suck out the ulcerous sores of one of his patients and so cured, not his patient, but himself. It may well be that he thought of the story of Francis of Assisi embracing the leper. Francis Xavier in his turn treated a wretched body as though it were that of Christ.

This should be added : that all his life he had no other fear except the fear of being afraid. He therefore defied his own natural revulsion, the frailty of his own delicate nature. It was this fear that was the secret of the astounding courage he was so often called upon to display in the Orient.

Upon leaving for Rome they took no money with them, being determined to beg their way. The market-women would now and then give them a few vegetables or some decaying fruit, or a peasant would toss them a hunk of black bread. Once, all such supplies failing, they were obliged to pawn a Breviary.

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The weather was still bad, and the marshes of the Romagna were flooded from the heavy rains. In many places they had to wade, with their black robes tucked round their waists, through water that was sometimes breast-high. But they were young, and what even youth could not enjoy, they still took with gratitude from the hand of God. Their spirits were so high they were unable to sleep for sheer delirious happiness. Rome was reached during Holy Week.

Michelangelo has given us the image of Paul III in marble, Titian in paint. His was a strong, deeply-graven face, with a beaked nose, and an untidy mass of white hair and beard. Christopher Hollis in that piquant manner of his puts it : "Humanly speaking, Paul could never have become Pope if his sister had not been the mistress of Alexander, nor the Church saved if Paul had not been Pope."⁴ He was one of those rare men who combine the ability of a statesman with penetrating spiritual vision ; no saint, but one who revered sanctity. He was the ruler the Church needed just then.

Ortiz, of whom Ignatius had been so afraid, turned out, most unexpectedly, to be friendly. It was he who arranged for the Companions to interview the Pope. Perhaps because Paul III had heard some reports of the University of Paris being tainted with heresy, he invited them to conduct a disputation for him while he was dining, and so well pleased was he with their learning and humility (especially was he charmed with Francis) that he asked in what way he could help them. Faber, the

⁴ *Saint Ignatius* (London, 1931), p. 135.

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leader of the group, asked for the Apostolic benediction on the pilgrimage. This was given, but the Pope significantly said, "All the same, I do not think you will go." He knew, as they did not, that a renewal of hostilities between Venice and the Turks was about to occur.

As a high mark of his approval he gave them a brief authorizing any bishop to ordain them as priests. They were now ready to return to Ignatius, and were anxious to return as soon as possible. Their visit to Rome had been eminently successful.

Upon reaching Venice those of the Company who had not yet received the priesthood were ordained on June 24, 1537, by the Bishop of Arba, after which Francis retired with Salmeron to a hut at Monselice near Padua for forty days to prepare himself for his first Mass. An act of such solemn sublimity was not to be undertaken lightly.

By now it had become quite evident that, for the time being, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land would have to be abandoned. The Turks had an effective blockade of the Adriatic. This proved to be plainly providential. For had Ignatius and his Companions succeeded in carrying out their vow, which they thought of as involving a permanent mission to the Mohammedans, their services would have been lost to Europe at a time when they were badly needed. Missions, as we shall see, were very soon undertaken, but they were directed from Rome, and the Society of Jesus was saved from narrowing the scope of its so abundant energies.

At Vicenza, where Francis said his first Mass, he and

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Rodriguez fell ill. At the city hospital they were put together in one narrow bed in an annex where they were not very well protected from the weather, and where they received scant attention from the nurses and doctors. Rodriguez has left an account of this sickness. One of them was suffering from fever, and wished to throw off all the coverings ; the other had a complaint which caused him shiveringly to wish for a dozen blankets. Rodriguez philosophically concludes that they both profited from the experience, because of their being obliged to exercise patience and charity.

In the autumn the members of the Company separated in order to go in pairs preaching through the towns of northern Italy. Xavier, yoked with Bobadilla, was assigned to the university city of Bologna, where his father had once studied law. The two young priests continued to beg their bread until a lady, who observed the devotion with which Francis said his Mass at the tomb of Dominic, introduced herself as a Spaniard and a Dominican tertiary, and persuaded them to stay at the house of her uncle, a canon of the cathedral. But though they accepted lodging, they insisted upon continuing to live upon what they could beg in the market-place.

Here it might be worth while to say that this was one of the very few women of whom we hear in connexion with Francis Xavier. Many saints have had close friendships with pious women. One thinks of the beautiful and intimate friendships between Francis of Assisi and Clare, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, Francis de Sales and Jeanne Frances de Chantal—all of them

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canonized saints. But this was not at all in accordance with the Ignatian idea. The founder of the Jesuits expressed his views on the subject in a sentence which sounds as cynical as it is pithy: "Have no relations with women, except those of the highest rank." Here is an instance of that consecration of worldly wisdom which is so typically Ignatian. Yet one wishes that he had never said it. One wishes still more that there was no need for saying it.

Francis learned to his sorrow that such friendships are always in danger of being misunderstood. In some way he became involved in a scandal which apparently arose out of his trustfulness towards one of his penitents. We know nothing of the details of the case, the authority for which is Camara.⁵ But he evidently burnt his fingers badly enough to be ever afterwards very cautious. As we shall see from his later letters of instructions to those who worked under him in India, he would have them avoid all possible shadow of suspicion in their dealings with women. But because even he had one woman friend, it is pleasant to record her name: that of Isabelle Casalino.

There was still no superior of the group of religious enthusiasts, nor any formally constituted order. They agreed to say, when questioned about it, that they belonged to the Company of Jesus, and let it go at that. But Francis and Bobadilla, paired in Bologna, made a private rule for themselves: that each in turn for one week would obey the other. The one whose week it was to be the subject had the duty of calling the people in the

⁵ Cf. Brou, vol. I, p. 65.

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streets for the sermon, then of borrowing a bench upon which the superior for the week could preach. Their Italian was faulty and hesitant, and was mixed with French and Spanish, but they had the greatest of all the gifts needed by a preacher—that passionate sincerity, without which the most skilful rhetoric is only wind. The burden of their preaching was the importance of frequenting the sacraments. When they noticed that anyone in the audience was moved by the sermon, they took pains to get into private conversation with him, so as to tell him what was necessary for salvation.

Francis, however, was overdoing things. Days of preaching and exhortation would be followed by nights of prayer. When he said Mass, it was with floods of tears. He ate little, and then only of the coarsest food ; and the fogs from the marshes did little good to a man who had only recently recovered from an illness. The nervous strain of years was telling upon him. Perhaps he was trying to make up for having resisted the Ignatian appeal for so long. Clearly he was overwrought.

To make matters worse, Bobadilla had to go away, and the whole of the work now fell on the shoulders of Francis, who made it a point of honour to shirk nothing. Upon Bobadilla's return with Codure, they found Francis so ill and weak that he could hardly stand. Complete collapse was imminent.

They took him to Rome, where they arrived in April, about Easter. All the Companions were shocked at the appearance of Francis, which was, as Rodriguez said, more that of a corpse than of a living man. His work-

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ing days seemed to be at an end, though he was barely thirty-two.

The Company of Jesus now began to find enemies in Rome. An Augustinian friar attacked them — probably enough in good faith — saying that Ignatius had been in trouble with the Inquisition both in France and Spain. His information was derived from what seemed a reliable source : Michael the Navarrese.

The early biographers ascribe all this to the work of the Devil. And so, no doubt, in a sense it was. But there are few classes of people more prone to believe and to repeat evil reports about others than that of respectable church members. The Devil, who is a very busy person, hardly needs to take the trouble of egging them on. The Augustinian was one of these sanctified scandalmongers.

Ignatius was in too delicate a position to allow calumny to pass uncontradicted. Fortunately there were in Rome three men who had been connected with the Inquisition at either Alcalá or Paris. They were called upon to testify that the Holy Office had given him a clean bill of theological health. Similar testimonials were extracted from the bishops of the towns where the Companions had been preaching.⁶

The connexion of Michael with all this was discovered. He had followed the Companions to Venice where, despite formerly having attempted to murder Ignatius, he asked to be admitted into their circle. Upon being re-

⁶ That of Augustine Zanetto, Vicar-General of Bologna, concerning Xavier and Bobadilla, is found in the *Monumenta Xaveriana* (vol. II, p. 133). It is dated June 26, 1538.

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fused, he tried to get revenge. One can only conclude that the man was not quite sane.

The exposure of the plot was crushing. The Pope ordered the Governor of Rome to publish an attestation to the orthodoxy of the Companions of Jesus, and to banish Michael the Navarrese.

Now that the plan for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land was of necessity laid aside, and with many opportunities for fruitful work occurring in Italy, the question arose as to what was to be the future of the group. From March to June 1539, they gave themselves to prayer and the discussion of the matter. Every point as it came up was dealt with in the same way: each man studied it by himself, praying for divine guidance; then it was dealt with in open debate; finally it was put to the vote. It was eventually decided that they constitute themselves into a religious order; that they should add the vow of obedience to those already taken, with a special vow of obedience to the Pope; and that they should elect a superior for life.

An important innovation was made. Applications were coming in from men who, though of great virtue, lacked natural gifts or learning. Were men of this type to be accepted by the Society? The decision reached was that "coadjutors," both priests and laymen, would be of decided service, but that they should not be bound by other than simple vows, solemn vows being reserved for men of parts and first-class education.

The Constitutions of the Society were accordingly drawn up to be submitted to Paul III who, upon reading

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them, exclaimed, "Here is the finger of God!" But the committee of cardinals to whom the Constitutions were submitted raised the objection that there were already too many religious orders, and that it would be wiser to suppress some of them than create a new one. Eventually, however, formal approval came, when the Bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae* was issued on September 27, 1540. By then Francis Xavier was in Lisbon.

After his illness of the spring of 1538, we do not hear much about him for some time. He needed a long period of rest and convalescence. Upon his recovery, instead of being assigned to preaching, he acted as secretary to Ignatius, a remarkable accordance of opinion existing between the two men. Though the occupation gave him plenty to do, Ignatius could keep an eye upon him to see that he did not again overtax his strength or practice too many austerities. Besides, in secretarial work he would not be exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

Then suddenly in March 1540 a great change came into his life. Govea who, it will be remembered, was Rector of St. Barbara's, and who had once sentenced Ignatius to a flogging which was never administered, was highly thought of by King John of Portugal. It was he who was therefore consulted about sending missionaries to Goa in India, and it was he who advised that Jesuits be asked for.

Once again we find that the very men whom Ignatius regarded as opposed to him were, when it came to a real issue, the ones who showed themselves his truest friends.

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This had been the case with Ortiz, who actually applied for admission into the Company, and to whom Ignatius gave the Exercises. Ignatius, it is true, decided against him on the rather surprising ground that he was too fat—he had to be roused from somnolence at one point by Ignatius's executing a Basque dance to revive his attention—but at least the Companions recognized that the man meant well. So now with Govea.

Peter Mascarenhas, the Portuguese Ambassador at Rome, was instructed by King John to ask for some Fathers of the Company, and though Ignatius without hesitation agreed to send them, he found it impossible to spare more than two. All told there were not yet twenty Jesuits, and of the six stationed at Rome, Salmeron and Broët were intended for a mission to Ireland and Scotland. Nevertheless Ignatius would let the King have two men.

Those chosen were Rodriguez (who had the advantage of being a Portuguese) and Bobadilla. This fiery and obstinate Spaniard, who was always so very sure of himself and of the soundness of his own opinions, seemed to be just the right material for the missionary field. Ignatius would have been hardly human had he not taken satisfaction in the reflection that India's gain would not be Europe's loss, and that he himself would find some relief in the departure of his self-assertive disciple.

But when Bobadilla, in obedience to Ignatius's summons, came from Rome to Naples, he was found to be crippled with sciatica. As the Portuguese Ambassador

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was impatient to get the matter settled, somebody else would have to go in Bobadilla's place. There was no one else to send except Francis Xavier.

It was therefore only through a seeming accident that the greatest of all missionaries since the days of Paul was assigned to his task. Francis had for a long time ardently desired to preach to the heathen—and none of all the Company had been so disappointed as he that the expedition to the Holy Land had been abandoned. But though he was so close to Ignatius, he had never once attempted to suggest himself, preferring to leave the matter in the hands of God.

Humanly speaking, his appointment seemed a foolish one. If ever there was a time when a man of his special training and talents was needed at home, where ordinary prudence would have kept him, it was then. Why should one so invaluable be wasted upon work which others could do as well?

Apart from all other considerations, there was the matter of his poor health. India has destroyed many a strong constitution, and Francis was a semi-invalid. Of all places of the world to send a man subject to attacks of fever, India surely was about the worst.

There are several answers to these objections. One is that zeal for foreign missionary work is a sure index of Christian vitality. Ignatius did not think he was wasting Francis by sending him to India, and the event proved his judgment correct. Moreover, there is something better than prudence—and that is charity. But the final answer is that the hand of God was visible in all that

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was done. India needed a saint ; Japan was waiting for a Master of Arts. The broken-down valetudinarian most astonishingly developed a constitution of iron.

One may account for all this by saying that the shrewd eye of Ignatius saw that Francis was of much tougher fibre than he seemed to be, and that he had positive genius for missionary work. One may also account for it by saying that God, who had inspired the choice, gave the necessary grace. Perhaps the shortest way of stating the case would be that Ignatius perceived the risks, but counted on God's support.

It was on March 14, 1540, that Ignatius who, as Ribadeneira tells us, was himself ill, summoned Francis to his bed-side, and gave him the order to leave for India. There was not as yet any positive obligation of obedience, for the Society was not formally established and had no General. But all the members of the group already accepted Ignatius's instructions as commands. Francis therefore made the instant reply, "Well, here I am—ready !" He was given a day in which to make his preparations for riding to Lisbon with the Ambassador. Rodriguez had already gone on by sea.

The farewell words of Ignatius to the son whom he was never to see again on earth have been recorded. They constitute the key to Francis's life : *Go and set all on fire.*



CHAPTER V

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FRANCIS XAVIER spent the next day packing up a few clothes and books, among which was a fat little volume of 680 pages whose long title may be abbreviated for convenience to *The Institutions of Religion* by Marcus Marulus.¹ It may be seen today with Francis's crucifix in Madrid.

The packing was soon done. Most of the day was given to those matters connected with the business of the Order that needed his attention. He therefore wrote out his acceptance of all that should be included in the final draft of the Constitutions of the Society; he cast his vote for Ignatius as General (and for Peter Faber in the event of Ignatius's death); and he made in writing his vows of perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience in the Society, asking Laynez to present them to the superior when he was elected. He was now ready to leave. On the morning of March 16, 1540, he set out for Lisbon with Mascarenhas.

Five days later, Palm Sunday, the Ambassador's cavalcade clattered into Loretto, where they remained until

¹ Cf. Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, pp. 351-2.

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Easter, Francis hearing the confessions of the party, and giving them Communion. The three months' journey to Lisbon was a mission preached on horseback.

On the last day of the month Bologna was reached. Here Francis had many friends who were glad to see him again and to observe the great improvement in his health. His face was radiant, for he was about to go to India. But they noticed that though he was well mounted and that he dined at the Ambassador's table, his cassock was as shabby as ever.

A swift courier had brought on despatches from Rome for Mascarenhas, and with these was a letter from Ignatius. With what charming affection Francis answers it : "For what is left of this life, I am well assured, it will be by letter only that we shall hold intercourse—in the other life we shall be *facie ad faciem* and embrace one another perpetually. So what remains to us is that for this little time which we have still to pass in our mortal exile, we should take frequent looks at one another by means of letters, and for my part I mean to do just as you bid me in this matter, and to keep the rule which little girls observe of writing constantly to their mothers."

All of Francis's earthly affections, which were very warm, were made part of that intense love of God which completely absorbed him. That is why in none of his long letters does he have space to spare to deal with the many curious things he saw in his travels—unless such information had some bearing upon his work. There are no descriptions of scenery, no purple patches. Because of this many readers of the letters have supposed that Francis

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took no interest in beauty, perhaps even had no eye for it. This could not have been the case, but he was always conscious of the transitoriness of all things. He had no time to spare except for the soul and God.

At Parma, reached after Modena and Reggio, Francis hoped to see his beloved Peter Faber. But as ill luck would have it, Peter had left only a few hours before to visit one of the Society's new recruits who was sick at Brescia. Strongly inclined to follow after Peter as Francis was, the impatient Don Pedro insisted on pressing on without further delay.

Among the members of the Ambassador's party was a rich young *hidalgo* named Francis de Lima. As he himself records, he had been roaming through many countries, with plenty of money to spend and with nobody to keep an eye upon him. Such fine gentlemen, as Francis knew very well, very often have a good deal lying heavy upon their consciences. So he sought him out and won his friendship by his kindness, witty conversation, and gaiety. It was impossible to talk with Francis and not be conscious of his charm. It was also impossible to talk with him without knowing that he was a man of God. Gradually the subject got round to the subject of general confession, and this was made to Francis at the next church they passed. "From that time," Lima wrote, "I became, thanks to God, a different man. It was then, for the first time, that I understood what it is to be a Christian."²

If Francis lost no opportunity of winning a soul,

² Cros, *Vie de Saint François Xavier*, vol. I, p. 161.

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he also lost no opportunity of exercising himself in humility. The horse provided for him by Mascarenhas was too magnificent an animal for a poor priest. He therefore took the first opportunity of exchanging with somebody who was badly mounted. The worst room in the inn, the worst bed—these were quite good enough for him. If a servant neglected any menial task, or the grooms the currycombing of the horses, Francis would take their duties upon himself. It would have been only too easy for such a man to have made himself more of a nuisance than a help, but everyone was enchanted with his courtesy and his delightful talk. Yet, as Tursellinus—perhaps somewhat officiously—tells us, he always kept that most difficult mean of tempering courtesy with gravity, so that everything he did and said had the mark of a saint about it.

While crossing the Alps, they were caught in a snow-storm, and the Ambassador's secretary fell from his horse into a snow-bank on a ledge above a steep gorge. Nobody ventured to go near him, because of the difficulty of keeping a foothold on the slippery road, and the man would have been lost had not Francis come along. Instantly leaping from his horse, he threw the secretary a rope and by main strength dragged him to safety.

Across southern France they rode at their ease until towering above them they saw the peaks and the pines of the Pyrenees. Francis had not seen that majestic sight for fifteen years. It must have brought his heart into his mouth.

The cavalcade is supposed to have passed near the

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Castle of Xavier, and there is a rock pointed out as the place from which Francis stood to look his last upon the home of his boyhood. That is only local tradition. But the early hagiographers, writing as their kind did for edification at all costs, said that Francis's refusal to go and say goodbye to his mother was the supreme proof of his detachment from the things of this world. Some Protestant writers, taking the statement at its face value, have very naturally considered this mere heartlessness. The fact is that both the praise and the detraction are equally wide of the mark: Francis's mother was dead, and his brothers were living elsewhere.³

In any case there is every reason to believe that the route taken did not go near the Xaviers' castle. Francis was carrying a letter (dated March 16th) ⁴ from Ignatius to his nephew, Beltram Loyola, whose castle lay considerably to the west. The most convenient route therefore was not through the Pass of Roncesvalles but the plain between the western edge of the mountains and the sea. A man so impatient as Mascarenhas would not have gone out of his way to make a second visit. Even so, it is not at all unlikely that Francis did see his brothers after all. It would have been quite possible to have sent a rider on in advance to give them warning of his coming, and to ask them to meet him at Loyola Castle. But about that nothing positive can be affirmed.

Through Burgos, with its superb cathedral, the Am-

³ We do not know the exact date of Doña Maria's death, but it is attested in a document dated July 29, 1529. (Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, p. 303.) Other attestations are given by contemporary documents. (*Ibid.*, pp. 355-6.)

⁴ The letter is in Cros. (*Doc. Nouv.*, p. 352.)

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bassador and his *entourage* now rode on the last stage of their journey, through Valladolid (from which place Bobadilla came), through Salamanca and the Tagus valley. About the middle of June they reached Lisbon. Francis here found Rodriguez suffering from the preliminary symptoms of his recurring quartan fever ; but his joy at seeing his friend restored him to health, and as Francis told Ignatius when writing on July 13th, a month had now passed during which he had been comparatively free of his ailment. The two Jesuits were soon deeply immersed in work. They had come to Portugal at a time when that country was enjoying a sense of almost boundless glory and opportunity. Her oriental empire was not destined to endure, but it was then at the height of its glory. And with the exalted mood went religious fervour. Portugal gave the Jesuits a flamboyant welcome.

The new wealth of America, Africa, and the Indies ultimately, indeed, proved a detriment. The most valiant of the Portuguese youth left their native land, in the majority of cases never to return. And when they did return it was too often corrupted by the vices of the Orient, or damned by their insensate love of gain. For the moment, however, Portugal was exulting in her astonishing success, and while dreaming of still greater things to come, saw herself in a crusading rôle. In John III she possessed a king who was just and merciful, and whose private morals were beyond reproach. He had, as Francis Xavier was later to discover, a certain lack of backbone, yet there is no doubt of his being a good-natured, pious, and well-meaning man. It was for this reason that he

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had sought out the very best available missionaries for the Indian missionary field.

His Queen was Catherine, the daughter of Archduke Philip of Austria and poor crazy Queen Joan. It had already been said that Ignatius once darkly hinted that the lady with whom he had been in love before his conversion, and to whom he had addressed his sonnets, was of royal blood. There are only four possible candidates for the honour of having been the *inamorata* of the founder of the Jesuits. One of these is Catherine.⁵

The whole thing seems preposterous, and the tradition about the royal blood of the object of Ignatius's passion may repose upon a misunderstanding of what he actually said, or be an embroidery upon it. But if we are to take it as being literally true, then it may well be that Queen Catherine of Portugal was the lady. We do not have to account for King John's interest in the Jesuits on this ground (for we know that in seeking them out he was following Govea's advice), but that interest would at least fit in with the known facts. What a fascinating subject for speculation ! Alas, it can be nothing more.

Three or four days after Francis arrived, Mascarenhas took him and Rodriguez to present them to the King and Queen. Writing to the Society at Rome, Francis gives a detailed account of their reception. The scene was one

⁵ The others are Germaine de Foix, the beautiful second wife of King Ferdinand ; Ferdinand's sister, Joan, who married Ferdinand King of Naples (her age would seem to put her out of the running) ; and the Princess Joan, the daughter of this couple—and it is she whom Stewart Rose believes to have been the lady in question. Germaine has recently been again put forward by Fülöp-Miller (pp. 33-4), but I find it hard to accept the identification.

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of almost bourgeois domesticity. The King sent for the Infanta Maria, a girl of twelve, and the Infante John, a boy of three, and told the Fathers about his other seven children who were dead, the conversation lasting over an hour.⁶

His Majesty wanted to know all about the Jesuit manner of life, and about the slanders against them in Rome. Of these matters he had heard something already, for nothing travels more quickly or further afield than calumny.

The king asked the Jesuits to act as confessors of the young courtiers. He told Francis that he had instituted a rule that all of them should go to confession once a week, for it was his belief that if the nobles would only become good Christians the lower orders would follow their example. A sound idea, it appealed to the practical Francis.

Afterwards Mascarenhas informed Francis that the King had told him he would give anything to have all the members of the Society in his dominions. Indeed, many of the most influential people at Court began to try to keep Francis and Rodriguez from going out to India. The King's confessor, and the King himself, were heard to say that it would be a pity to let the Jesuits go to gather fruit haphazard among the infidels when there was such a harvest waiting at home.⁷

Francis passed all this on to Ignatius, but without ex-

⁶ Maria was married in 1544 to Philip II, and died in childbirth the following year. John never came to the throne, but his posthumous son did, to be succeeded by his grand-uncle, the Cardinal-Infante Henry.

⁷ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. I, pp. 216-17.

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pressing any preference for either of the two fields of labour. No one was ever more faithful than he to the Jesuit principle that a religious should hold himself indifferent about the work assigned him but leave the decision always to the superior. Nevertheless Francis let Ignatius know that other people in Lisbon believed there would be a marvellous harvest of souls in India; and that if the Jesuits only retained their present contempt of all personal advantages, in a few years it would be possible to convert "several nations" to the Christian faith.

It should be noted that though Francis was naturally pleased at being received at Lisbon with so much enthusiasm, and though he told Ignatius of the estimates that have been made of his success, he never allowed himself to be carried away. He soon came to suspect that King John and his ebullient courtiers were a little too facile in their piety. And in India he eventually came to despair of ever being able to make the well-intentioned but weak prince act in the only way that could remove obstacles to the spread of Christianity among heathen constantly scandalized by the behaviour of the Portuguese officials.

In the interval, however, while waiting for the fleet to arrive from India, he and Rodriguez busied themselves in Lisbon. They refused lodgings at the palace, and lived in poorly furnished rooms at the hospital. They insisted upon begging their bread in the streets, until the accumulation of work made it impracticable; even then they still kept up the practice twice a week for the sake of humility. Of the food sent them by the

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King they ate very sparingly, giving the rest to the patients in the hospital.

Preaching and the hearing of confessions occupied a large part of every day, and several priests asked to have the Exercises given to them. All this, coming on top of everything else, left the Jesuits little spare time.

Yet they were glad to give the Exercises, as this was one of their main means for the testing of vocations. It was Francis's hope to get at least a dozen recruits in Portugal for the Indian missions. For a while there was the prospect of securing (what would have been very valuable in India) the services of a doctor of medicine. But in the end Francis was able to obtain only one volunteer. This was Mansilhas—poor material, for the man was both stupid and (as events proved) intractable. In spite of this Francis showed towards him an extraordinary patience and affection, excusing all his faults for the sake of his simplicity, until eventually he was obliged to expel him from the Society.

Among the multifarious activities of the two Jesuits in Lisbon was that of a chaplaincy to the prisoners of the Inquisition. The King's brother Henry, who was both Cardinal and Infante, had been appointed Grand Inquisitor by the Court ; and though Rome refused to recognize him in this capacity, and indeed protested against his appointment, he nevertheless began operations upon the pattern of the Spanish model. The prisons were full of baptized Jews who had relapsed to the practices of Israel. The souls of these Francis and Rodriguez wished to save.

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It would be altogether too much to expect that Francis Xavier, after his upbringing in the Iberian peninsula, should share our enlightened views about the Holy Office. He took it, as everybody else did, for granted, though he was without the fanaticism of many of the people of his time. Years later in India, after all other methods had failed, it was he who personally requested the King to establish the Inquisition at Goa.

This does not mean that he took pleasure in the thought of contumacious heretics being burned alive, but he shared the universal view that—since heresy is the most dangerous of all things—it should be drastically repressed. It was, according to this theory, the duty of the civil arm to punish those whom competent ecclesiastical authority had, after due examination, pronounced guilty of the offence and who were obstinate in their refusal to be reconciled to the Church.

It was precisely such reconciliations that Francis sought to effect. He and Rodriguez went among the prisoners and converted many of them, including a Rabbi. For this purpose they even used the Spiritual Exercises, knowing their efficacy, though they do not appear to have given them in full, but only the first week's meditations upon sin.

In spite of all their efforts, however, two of those in the custody of the Inquisition refused their ministrations, and were reluctantly handed over to secular authority.

There should be no misunderstanding on this point. The two Jesuits were in no sense officials of the Holy Office. They were merely concerned with the doing of

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a spiritual work of mercy — the salvation of souls. When the condemned were led out to execution, Xavier and Rodriguez accompanied them to the stake, because even at the last moment they might return to the Faith, or even amid the flames seek confession. But the unfortunate wretches died in contumacy.

By the autumn the King had become almost too attached to the Jesuits. Instead of merely suggesting that they should remain in Portugal, he began to insist upon their remaining. This created an extremely delicate situation. They could not afford to offend the very man upon whom their support in India depended. Moreover, it was their expectation, as it had been part of John's original idea, that other Jesuits should reinforce them there. The King's favour was essential to the success of their plans. In this dilemma Rodriguez wrote to Ignatius explaining the matter and asking for advice.

That advice, when it came, was very canny: Francis and Simon had better submit to the King's desires, but perhaps a compromise might be effected under which Simon could remain and Francis go. The arrangement turned out to be providential. Rodriguez was invaluable as a Jesuit agent at the Court, and as a recruiting-sergeant for the missions. Paul de Camerino, an Italian secular priest who had joined the Society during the previous year, could take the place of Rodriguez in India; and there was of course poor dear lumpish Mansilhas.

The King consented to the arrangement, and though he hardly lived up to Francis's ideal, he was always a loyal friend of the Jesuits. In fact his loyalty was so

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great, that later Pombal (the man who expelled the Society from Portugal in the eighteenth century) floated the *canard* that John III was actually a secretly received member of the Order.

Among the many things that are to the credit of John there is this : that through him the first of the Jesuit colleges—that of Coimbra—was established. Its organization was to be the great life-work of Rodriguez. A greater work awaited Xavier in the Orient.

Martin de Sousa, the newly appointed Governor of Goa, was preparing to sail in the spring (the only time when ships left for the East), and the authorities in charge of the fleet's equipment asked Francis to make out a list of the things he would need. He answered that he needed nothing. Upon being pressed again, all he would accept was a new tunic and a rough rug apiece for himself and his companions, and a few books. A servant was offered him ; he also was refused. "But your position demands it !" exclaimed the official, Don Antonio de Ataide, Count of Castanheira, "You can't wash your own linen, or cook your own stew !" To this Francis replied with no asperity but firmly, "Sir, this anxiety about an imaginary dignity, this attempt to keep up appearances, is what has reduced Christianity to its present deplorable condition. I intend to wash my own clothes and cook my own food. And I hardly think that I am going to lose any standing by doing so."

Among the letters written during Francis's stay in Portugal, two have a great personal interest. The Doctor of Navarre, Martin de Azpilcueta, had written from

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Coimbra, where he was professor of Canon Law, to his cousin's son inviting him for a visit. Francis was unable to go, because of the pressure of work, but on September 28, 1540, he wrote the former director of his studies a very affectionate letter in which he promised to come as soon as it was possible to do so. On October 8th Rodriguez wrote to Ignatius saying that Xavier was fifteen leagues away but would be back in a week. This would suggest that he was paying the visit. However, a later letter (dated November 4th) seems to indicate that this was not the case, and that the two men never met again.⁸ But the letters which passed between them are an ample testimonial, if one is needed, to the warm-heartedness of Francis.

The same affectionate disposition — an unashamed baring of the heart — is in the letter to Ignatius dated March 18, 1541. "In this life," Francis writes, "we can hardly hope to meet again. Whoever, therefore, of us may arrive first at the life of the Blessed, let him remember to pray that Christ our King may bring his brother also to be his companion in glory."

In the same letter, which gives high praise to King John and Sousa, occurs a significant phrase: "There is an island off India, where there are no Jews or Moors, but only heathen"; and Francis adds that he believes there will be no difficulty in making the king of that island and all his subjects Christians. Already he was dreaming of more than India. Ceylon, which was undoubtedly the island he had in mind, was destined to be for Francis

⁸ Cf. Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, pp. 368, 371, 372.

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a bitter disappointment. But the point is that his spirit was that of a *Conquistador*. He hoped to do for Christ deeds which should surpass those that Cortés and Pizarro did for the Emperor.

He sends in his letter to Ignatius and Codure a final account of the work accomplished in Lisbon. The Court, he writes, is so greatly reformed that it has become like a monastery. The majority of the courtiers go to confession and communion every week. If there were double the number of Fathers they would still be busy. Why, they have to hear confessions all day long and half the night—and this counting only the members of the Court! There is no time for preaching—confessions seeming to be more profitable.

To Le Jay and Laynez, Francis gives an account of the proposed college at Coimbra. Of Mansilhas he writes that he hopes to get him ordained in India, and asks for a dispensation to slide him without the usual delay through sub-diaconate to priesthood. Though Mansilhas lacks learning (and Francis might have added, brains), perhaps his goodness of heart may supply this deficiency.

Francis was at this time, as he was to remain for some time afterwards, in the mistaken belief that learning was of small consequence in the missionary field. Yet this error was sanctioned so to speak by the original draft of the Society's Constitutions. In the case of Francis, as in the case of the other early Jesuits, it is a measure of his humility. Here is a man who is a Master of Arts of Paris, a former professor, a man of high intellectual distinction—yet it never occurs to him that he is wasting

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his own precious scholarship and his gifts upon the benighted heathen.

He asks in conclusion that the Fathers when they write should mention every member of the Society by name, giving all the news at such length that it will take him a week to read their letters. It reminds one of Ignatius's hunger for minute details. He once said that he would like to be told precisely how many fleas were biting his sons at night.

Three days before Francis sailed from Lisbon a momentous event, about which he was to know nothing until a year later, occurred at Rome. The election for the first General of the now formally approved Society of Jesus was held. When the votes were examined, it was found that every one of them except his own had been cast for Ignatius. In great agitation he begged them to reconsider the matter, to have another election. Again he was unanimously elected. It was only after he had consulted his confessor, who told him that it was his plain duty to accept the office, that he could be persuaded to yield.

Before embarking, all the members of the fleet met in the church of Our Lady of Nazareth, where Francis sang the Mass of the Angels, the one offered for those in peril on the sea. In those days sometimes half the number of ships that ventured on such a journey was lost. But it was a happy man who clambered with Camerino and Mansilhas on to the little carrack. It was probably the first time that Francis had ever been on a sailing vessel, unless it was a fishing-boat of the Biscayan coast.

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He had with him, tied up with his package of books, certain very important documents about which he told nobody anything. These had been sent to him from Rome on July 27th and October 4th of the previous year, and were the briefs from the Holy See appointing him Papal Nuncio to the princes and lords of the isles of the Red Sea, Persia, and the Orient in general.⁹ With these was included a special letter to David, King of Ethiopia.

All Lisbon was at Restella which was called, because of so many disastrous partings, the Place of Tears. That day many tears were shed by those to whom Francis had endeared himself and whom he was never to see again. A local tradition says that the nuns of Belem brought out a portable pulpit from which Francis preached.¹⁰ He loved the people of Lisbon, and they loved him. But he loved Christ even more; the face of one who was off to conquer a continent for his Lord was radiant through its tears.

⁹ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. II, pp. 119-128.

¹⁰ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. I, p. 14.

CHAPTER VI

TO THE INDIES

THE DATE on which the fleet sailed was April 7, 1541, Francis Xavier's thirty-fifth birthday. The voyage to India under favourable conditions took six months. This time it took over a year.

When today we think of a sea-voyage, delightful pictures at once come into our minds : a spacious deck where people are playing games or reclining in chairs ; white paint and shining brass ; a luxurious lounge ; the best of food and wines ; a cup of soup in the morning, and tea in the afternoon, to sustain the already over-fed passengers ; orchestras and dancing ; soft carpets, downy beds, and steaming baths ; swimming pools and gymnasiums ; well-trained stewards, and well-bred officers—the only possible discomfort during fair weather is a twinge of suspicion that the whole thing is so overdone as to become rather vulgar.

Let us now try to imagine what a long sea voyage was like in the sixteenth century. The vessels employed in the trade between Portugal and India were carracks, a type of ship that was heavy and short and, though strongly

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built, difficult to handle in a rough sea. On an average one out of every ten was lost.

The food consisted mostly of salt pork and hard biscuits full of maggots. Fruit and vegetables ran out after a few days. Water soon became slimy and stank so badly that one could drink it only in the dark—and even then it was as well to take it with a cloth over one's mouth. None but the officers or the very rich had cabins, and these were small and stuffy, lit only with a swinging lantern. If the weather was fine one could sit on deck (but no chairs were provided)—otherwise the passengers were packed like cattle under hatches. There were no stewards, and the rough sailors would freely use a rope or a belaying-pin if one got in their way.

Little was known about the art of seamanship, and less about the uncharted seas. But the Portuguese, having already learned about the seasonal monsoon, travelled so as to avoid it. Then there were the doldrums, when the ships lay helpless in danger of their water running out. On every voyage a high percentage of those on board died of fever. No doubt days dawned gladdened by the beauty of sea and sky and sun, and there were calm nights of stars; but taken as a whole a journey such as Francis made was very far from being a pleasant experience.

He might, however, have made himself comparatively comfortable. The King, as we have seen, tried to get him to take a servant, an outfit, and special provisions. And a cabin was at his disposal. But he generally slept on deck curled up on a coil of rope, with an anchor for a pillow, while some sick man occupied his berth.

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There is a Basque proverb: *Asko badok, asko bearko dok*, which means if you have a lot you will need a lot. The converse was true for Francis Xavier. Even the little he had was always at the disposal of others. And he found plenty of work to do among the ship's company, many of whom were from the slums and prisons of Lisbon. They sweltered in the dark, foul, verminous hold, while among them went Francis, nursing the sick, washing their clothes, scraping up their vomit, hearing (when he got the chance) their confessions.

All the way out men died. During the months the fleet wintered at Mozambique there were eighty deaths. On the flag-ship, the *Santiago*, the largest of all the vessels, there were many poor souls who needed Francis in their last hour. As he wrote to Ignatius, almost all of them died well. It was a special consolation when he whispered that the Pope had given him powers of plenary indulgence and over cases usually reserved. To be shrived by Francis seemed almost like getting a passport into heaven. Most of them were of the poorest classes and had come on board, as Valignano picturesquely puts it, with an extra shirt, a couple of loaves of bread, and a bottle of brandy as all their baggage.

From the first day out the physical sufferings began, with the carracks rolling horribly as they breasted the open seas. Something worse than choppy waves met them off the coast of Guinea. There they lay becalmed for six weeks of agony, waiting for a breeze, sweltering under a burning sky. Lowering clouds would suddenly pour upon them torrents of warm rain. The clothes of the

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wretched passengers grew filthy, and their skin broke into scurvy. Then fever struck them.¹ Not for all the world, said Francis afterwards, would he face a single day so full of difficulties, were it not for God.

He took no notice of his own pains, forgetting them in work for others. Now there was hardly time for those brief naps upon deck, such were the demands upon him. The ration of food and wine he received from the officers' table was given to the sick, and he contented himself with a little bread and water.

Brisk winds followed, and the five ships scudded along making for the Cape of Good Hope. This they swung wide around, fearing shoals near land, and five months after leaving Lisbon, reached Mozambique.

Ordinarily the stay there would have been only a few days for rest, and for the replenishing of their stores of food and water. But they had been so delayed off Guinea that the monsoon was beginning to blow. Therefore they had to wait for the weather to clear. It was merely the choice between the lesser of two evils, for the unhealthy little coral island was known as the Graveyard of the Portuguese.

One good thing, so Francis writes to Ignatius on New Year's Day, 1542, has come of their sufferings. The Governor and the officers of the fleet have become convinced that all this group of missionaries have done was solely for the glory of God. Even as he writes, he is himself so over-

¹ Cf. Brou, vol. I, p. III. Whiteway (*The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 46-7) gives an account of the terrors and dangers of a voyage to Goa.

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come with weakness that he ends hurriedly with an apology for not writing more: "Today I was bled for the seventh time and do not feel very well. God be praised."

Unluckily, far more unluckily than Francis suspected—for the full consequences did not appear until ten years later—he was now against his will entangled in the jealousies of rival administrators. So far as one can discover, this is what happened.

Sousa was on his way to replace Stephen da Gama, the son of Vasco da Gama, as Governor at Goa. Somehow this became known in India, probably through a merchant who had travelled from Venice to Ormuz. Upon the failure of the fleet to arrive in September, it was concluded that it must have put in to Mozambique. Gama therefore sent the *Coulam*, under Louis Mendez de Vasconcellos, with letters to his brother, Alvaro d'Ataide, who was in command of the *San Pedro*.

What was in these letters we do not know, but Sousa seized them, and arrested Ataide and Vasconcellos on a charge of conspiracy. It was all probably nothing but suspicion on Sousa's part and a desire to humiliate the official whom he was replacing. As M. Bellesort says, the pleasure of a viceroy in taking his post was not complete unless he destroyed the reputation of his predecessor.²

In some way or other, a rather shady character, Suarez de Mello by name, but nicknamed the Gallician, was mixed up in the matter. He had a grudge against Gama and brought out to Mozambique a rich assortment of stories about him, of the sort that Sousa was only too

² Page 84.

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willing to hear. They happened to be false, but suspicion in a jealous mind has all the authority of fact. Sousa, with the cunning upon which men of his stamp pride themselves, determined to sail on the *Coulam* in advance of the fleet, and by arriving at Goa before he was expected, forestall any plot that had been contrived against him.

The way Francis became involved in this miserable business was that Sousa insisted upon his going with him. Camerino and Mansilhas might remain behind, and follow with the other ships ; but Francis would have to go with the Governor.

It would seem possible that Ataide, inflamed with a sense of the injustice done him, associated Francis with the high-handed proceedings, and may even have brought himself to believe that it was Francis who suggested the course of action. At any rate his consenting to accompany Sousa was offence enough.³

There are other explanations for the dislike Ataide seems to have taken to Xavier, and these will be given in their proper place, when we find him, as Commandant of Malacca, doing all he could to hinder Francis from going to China. The one usually offered is that his animosity arose out of this incident. If it be correct, Ataide must have been one of those men who make it a point of honour never to forgive an injury done their sacred selves. As Sousa was dead and beyond his power at the time when he had a means of taking revenge, he transferred his hatred to Francis.

³ Whiteway (*op. cit.*, p. 76) gives this interpretation of the incident. But it is by no means securely established.

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Had it not been for this vindictive man, a great scheme would have been brought to completion : Francis would have succeeded in entering China, and through China he might have turned the flank of paganism in Japan, for precisely that was his strategy. A petty squabble between officials jealous of each other's authority prevented the conquest of the Orient for Christ.

This is, however, merely to state a problem in inadequate terms. Humanly speaking, it is likely that Asia could have been won had Francis preached in China, had he lived for another ten years. Humanly speaking, its winning is now impossible. But the apparent failure of any of God's instruments is only part of His larger plan, about which we know nothing. The historian can deal only with facts and human motives. He can (sometimes) tell what happened and how it came about. Why it happened is quite beyond him.

Already, then, even before Francis had begun his missionary labours, a situation had arisen which was to result in the failure of his hopes and in his own death. At the end of February the *Coulam*, with Sousa and Francis on board, and accompanied by two smaller vessels, set sail.

Bold mariners would have struck northeast across the Indian Ocean in a clear straight line for India. But Portuguese seamanship was not bold. The ships went due north, hugging the African coast.

When Malindi (Melinde as the Portuguese called it) was reached the ships anchored, and the long-boats went ashore for water and meat and fruit. The town was Mohammedan, but on a cliff near by there stood a cross

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erected by Vasco da Gama, and to Francis it seemed a symbol of triumph, a promise of the harvest of souls to come.

Writing to the Society at Rome from Goa on September 18, 1542, he gives an account of their stay. The King, as he calls him, came on board to greet the Governor, and courtesies were exchanged. The same scene (though a different occasion) is described by Camoens in the *Lusiads*:⁴

Fair was the show the royal barge display'd,
With many a flag of glist'ning silk array'd, . . .
And, onward as they came, in sov'reign state
The mighty king amid his princes sat . . .
His purple mantle boasts the dye of Tyre,
And in the sunbeam glows with living fire.
A golden chain, the skilful artist's pride,
Hung from his neck, and glitt'ring by his side
The dagger's hilt of star-bright diamond shone,
The girdling baldric burns with precious stone . . .
Wide o'er his head, of various silks inlaid,
A fair umbrella cast a grateful shade.
A band of menials, bending o'er the prow,
A horn wreath'd round the crooked trumpets blow;
And each attendant barge aloud rebounds
A barb'rous discord of rejoicing sounds.

Francis had a long conversation with one of the leading men of the town who asked him whether the Christian churches were well attended, and how fervent were the worshippers. Among the adherents of Islam, he went on (speaking only of his knowledge of local conditions)

⁴ Book II, Mickle's translation.

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piety had long ago grown cold. Though there were seventeen mosques at Malindi, only three were in use, and even those were attended by few. The good man could not understand why this should be, but Francis of course promptly told him that it was because the one true God held misbelievers in abomination.

An imam of eminent learning now took part in the discussion, and said that he had made a vow that if the Prophet did not appear again on earth (as was promised) within two years, he intended to renounce his religion. Making all necessary allowances for Francis's sanguine temperament, it would seem that the Mohammedan faith on the east coast of Africa was at that time at a low ebb.

The people of Malindi in their turn learned something about the Christian religion. A man on board having died, Francis sang a requiem Mass for him, much to the approval of the Moslems, who were *connoisseurs* of religious ceremonial even if they were not conspicuously devout.

We must date the visit to Malindi at about the middle of March ; a month later the three ships arrived at Socotra, an island at the entrance to the Red Sea. Francis describes it as of about a hundred miles in circumference, a very barren place, with neither corn nor rice nor millet nor wine nor fruit. But it abounded in cattle and palms, and did some trade in aloes and incense. Indeed the Socotrian aloes had from time immemorial been famous among the makers of specifics.

The inhabitants turned out to be Christians — of a sort.

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Francis's account of them is that they boasted of being the converts of the Apostle Thomas, but that they had not so much as heard of baptism, and nobody among them could read or write. Four times a day they went to church for prayers, summoned by wooden clappers such as are used during Holy Week ; but the prayers were said by rote in a language unintelligible to them. He noted down some of these prayers, and could distinguish *Alleluias*. He came to the conclusion that the liturgy was Chaldean. Their priests, whom he called their *caciz*, were married but abstained not only from meat but fish and milk ; and the community observed two fasts a year.

All this is very accurate, though one could not expect the account to be quite complete. Christians had been in Socotra since the fourth century, and two hundred years later the number of baptized was considerable. During the Middle Ages Arabian and European voyagers mention them as Nestorians nominally under the jurisdiction of the Primate of Baghdad. They later seem to have been affiliated with the Ethiopian Jacobites.

They had no ordained priests, but the official called by Francis the *caciz* (possibly a mis-spelling of *Cacique*) was entitled by others the *odambo*, and was elected by the people for a year. During that time he had to observe continence. For a long time the Socotrians had united baptism and circumcision, but eventually baptism fell into desuetude.

The distinguishing mark of their worship was an extraordinary veneration for the cross, which they incensed on their altars, anointing it also with melted butter.

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Every man, woman and child wore a cross around the neck.

In 1507 or 1508 the Portuguese chased away the Arabs who were harassing them, and for a short time there was a Franciscan mission on the island, but Albuquerque, thinking the post too dangerous to maintain, had ordered its evacuation. Socotra soon slipped back into its superstitions.⁵

Francis wished to stay among these people for a while to instruct them. But Sousa was anxious to sail on to India, and so nothing could be done except to baptize some children. Two little boys whom Francis got hold of for this purpose ran screaming to their mother, and she came up crying, begging him not to do anything so dreadful : she protested that she was an Arab and did not wish her sons to become Christians.

Then a surprising thing happened. The crowd of Christian Socotrians that had by now gathered round backed her up, shouting to Francis, "Certainly do not baptize them—not even if they want to be baptized. They are Arabs, and Arabs are not worthy to be Christians!" Grieved, but also partly amused, Francis recounts the incident in his letter to Ignatius.⁶

He never forgot Socotra, with its neglected Christians. Several times he appealed for missionaries to instruct them in their faith, and in 1549 he assigned two Jesuits to work on the island. But the Governor of the Indies, not wishing to offend the Arabs, with whom he had just made a

⁵ Cf. Brou, vol. 1, pp. 120-2.

⁶ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, p. 256.

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treaty, refused to allow them to go. Before long the Mohammedans stamped out all vestiges of Christianity there.

Sousa, too, had more important business on hand than the saving of the souls of these people. Early in April the *Coulam* and its attendant ships pulled up their anchors and hoisted sail.

On May 6, 1542, they arrived, too late at night for disembarkation, in the harbour of Goa. The dark mass of the Western Ghats faded into the night, and among the millions of stars that sparkled on the Indian skies shone the Southern Cross. Here at last was the mysterious land of which Francis had dreamed so often. Leaning against the rail of the ship he could see lights on shore, and could hear faintly the sounds of human life. He dedicated himself anew to the work he was about to begin.

The next morning all was bustle and stir. Don Martin de Sousa, arrayed in all his finery, and full of a vast sense of self-importance, was about to enter into his Governorship. Behind him, as he stepped clanking on shore, came a tall, bearded young man in a shabby cassock, and carrying his own baggage. Francis Xavier had come to win an empire for Christ.

CHAPTER VII

IN GOA

PORTUGUESE power in India had been established just over forty years before the arrival of Francis Xavier. Vasco da Gama had opened the way in 1498 by rounding the Cape of Good Hope, but it was Cabral who, at the turn of the century, began to establish trading-stations and forts along the Calicut coast. There was no attempt at conquest, as in the New World, though there was a good deal of playing off one rajah against another. The sole object was commercial profit, and it was intended that the profit was to be kept as a royal prerogative.

But the officials and soldiers sent out to the Portuguese settlements soon discovered ways of obtaining almost unlimited private gain. The temptations were so great that even men who under normal conditions would have been honest could not resist the opportunities for feathering their own nests. Effective control from Portugal was extremely difficult, and therefore, so long as the King's coffers were filled, there was a willingness to turn a blind eye upon the venality everywhere rampant. Alfonso Albuquerque, the greatest of all the Governors, and a man of strict honour, expressed his disgust bluntly when he

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wrote to King Emmanuel saying that there was not a single man in India whom he could trust, not one who would not tell a thousand lies for a ruby, or break a thousand oaths for a bale of silk. By the time that Francis Xavier landed the situation had become progressively worse.

Enervated as the settlers were by sudden luxury and by the climate of India, they still retained a vague idea that Portuguese imperial expansion had about it the nature of a crusade in which they were taking part. Nor was this idea lost upon the Indian people who drew from it, however, conclusions little favourable to Christianity. When to corruption and rapacity was added licentiousness, Moslem and Brahmin alike viewed the religion of the Portuguese with cool contempt.

There is abundance of contemporary evidence about the manner of life of the European colonists. The French travellers Pyrard de Laval and Mocquet picture it in much the same way as does the Dutchman Linschoten.

Through the crowds of natives the Portuguese *hidalgo* would swagger, dressed in taffeta, satin, or silk. Even on horseback the fine gentlemen had to be followed by his pages and slaves whose duty it was to hold over him an immense parasol. The common soldiers also, though they had been only cowherds or street-cleaners in Portugal, passed themselves off as grandees before the Indians, when they took their promenades in finery hired for the occasion.

Their women were jealously guarded, according to the mode of a Moslem harem. They spent their days singing,

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strumming guitars, chewing betel-nut, gossiping, and looking out at the passers-by from behind the trellis-work of their balconies. Stories were told of how on the slightest suspicion, because of a look or a dream, they were strangled or drowned by their jealous lords, and secretly buried in the garden.

There was, however, frequently ample ground for suspicion. Linschoten describes the women as notoriously unchaste, and tells of the many wiles they employed to deceive their husbands. One of their favourite devices was to mix with his food or drink a drug extracted from the datura weed, which would put the man off into prolonged sleep, during which the wife could with perfect safety enjoy the society of her paramour.¹

For the children of such unions there was neither religion nor morality as a check upon their capricious passions. The native wives and concubines were baptized, but only as a matter of form ; in secret they retained their superstitions, adding to their own vices, as Père Brou puts it, the vices of their husbands, and passing both on to their children.²

Yet there was a great parade of religion, for the Portuguese loved the show of expansive piety and splendid ceremonial. At the corner of every street there were posters announcing what indulgences might be gained. Inside the churches, mingled with the crowds of slaves, some of them with manacles upon their feet, would be the

¹ Pages 211-12. Pyrard de Laval confirms this (p. 114, Hakluyt Society translation). The drug is still used in India, especially by thieves.

² Page 149.

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Portuguese gentlemen, just deposited from their palanquins, and followed by a crowd of pages carrying parasols, chairs, cushions, and rugs. Very few women were present. For there were very few women in Goa of Portuguese blood.

Those who went to church were brought right into the nave in a litter, from which they emerged tinkling with jewelry, frightfully painted, and tottering on slippers so fantastically high-heeled as to be six inches off the ground.³ What with the pages arranging their carpets, their gilded chairs, their fans, their sachets, their handkerchiefs, and their prayer-books, it would take a good quarter of an hour before they got to their places, preceded by a procession of their children and servants.

At the elevation of the Host, there would be an ostentatious beating of the breast, and a cry of *Deos de Misericordia*; then everybody would resume the interrupted conversation. Through it all there went on the chewing of betel-nut.

When religious conditions were such, it is little wonder that the sacraments were seldom frequented. Even those who went to communion at Easter, thought nothing of going several years without confession.⁴ Some did so hypocritically, as a mere matter of form.

Yet it was not altogether their fault. There were few priests in India, and among these there were no more than two or three qualified to preach. The result was that many of the Portuguese went whole years, as Valig-

³ Cf. Pyrard de Laval, p. 104.

⁴ Cf. Brou, vol. 1, pp. 149-150; Pyrard de Laval, pp. 100-4.

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nano tells us, without once hearing the word of God. Except for those in the towns, there was generally no one even to administer the sacraments or to say Mass.⁵

It would be unjust not to say that Goa nevertheless contained many men and women of excellent character. The fact that a strong Confraternity of Mercy was at work, and that a college and hospital had been founded, attests to the existence of such people. But there can be no doubt that the vicious outnumbered the good. The chief obstacle Francis always found to missionary work in India was the bad example set by the Portuguese.

Upon arrival, Francis went at once to call upon the Bishop, John d'Albuquerque. He was a Franciscan, who had at one time been the King's confessor ; but though very pious, he was old and ill — not at all capable of coping with a diocese that stretched from Ormuz to Malacca, or even with Goa itself. Most of his work therefore was performed by Vicars-General in the principal settlements.

Francis, having knelt to kiss the ring on the frail finger, presented the brief which appointed him Papal Nuncio. Immediately he added that it was his intention to make no use of his powers, except in accordance with the Bishop's own directions.

This was an instance of touching humility and, as such, charmed the old man ; but Francis later paid dearly for concealing the fact that he was actually the Nuncio. Nobody except the Bishop knew of the existence of the brief from Rome, so that when the time came for Francis

⁵ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, p. 38.

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to exercise his faculties, it was possible to refuse to believe that he possessed them. If word of his appointment had only been quietly passed around, a good deal of trouble might have been prevented.

Francis, however, always preferred to avoid everything that savoured of ostentation. He feared to raise a barrier between himself and the people among whom he had come to work. It was one of his chief characteristics that he was all things to all men ; particularly he had a happy knack for putting himself on the same level with simple or ignorant souls, sailors and children and slaves.

He took up his lodgings at the hospital, to work among the miserable and destitute. At night he slept upon one of the native rush mats, and this he spread by the bedside of the sufferer most likely to die, or most likely to need attention. With hospital work and the hearing of confessions his mornings were fully occupied. It was understood that, as soon as he had finished Mass (and this was at daybreak), he was at anybody's service.

In the afternoons he went to the lazar-house and the prisons. As India had a great many lepers, and as Goa was well supplied with prisons (having no less than three), the afternoons were as busy as the mornings.

All the same he somehow found time for a practice which he kept up to the end of his life. Ringing a bell, he would go through the streets, calling the children—and anyone else who chose to come—to the church for catechism. Nearly all of them were woefully ignorant of the most fundamental truths of religion. Even in 1545,

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Anthony Criminale had to tell Ignatius that there were many people in Goa who could give no fuller account of their faith except that they believed what Christians believed.⁶

Among those who were young and innocent much could be done. Their elders were in too many cases hardened in sin, but these—children or poor slaves—might be won for Christ. It was a different sort of teaching from that to which Francis had been accustomed at the University of Paris, but how much better it was. Time and time again in his letters he used to exclaim that if those who were spending their days in class-rooms disputing learnedly over trivialities could only be brought to realize the good they might achieve as missionaries, he would have no dearth of helpers.

With a motley crowd of native or Eurasian children at his heels, and some twinkling-eyed images of God cut in ebony, he would stride down the street in his shabby cassock and with his face beaming. Then in the church very simply, and with the charm of his goodness shining in his face, he would ask questions and explain what God had done for them.

The method was so successful that it was adopted by all the churches in the Portuguese settlements. It should be noted very carefully that the essence of the method was that it united instruction with prayer. For instance, Francis would give out a certain article of faith and ask the children if they believed it. When they answered that they did, he would say, "Very well. Now I want you to

⁶ Massara, quoted by Brou, vol. I, p. 133.

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say with me : My Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, give us the grace to believe firmly this article of our holy faith. Now let us say an Our Father." This would be said in silence, then Francis would say, "Now, all of you together with me : Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, obtain for us from God the grace to believe firmly this article of our holy faith." Then there would be in silence a Hail Mary.

Another device that Francis found so useful that he employed it wherever he went, was the putting of Christian doctrine into rhymed verse. The advantage of this is obvious : long before a child was old enough to understand the meaning of the words, he was able to sing them, and thus they became forever fastened in his memory. It was an ingenious way of making Mother Goose teach the Gospel.

In India it was especially effectual, for there everybody sings. The man sowing a field sings ; the woman scouring her earthenware pots sings ; and especially travellers going at night in groups sing all together hours on end. Francis had hit at once upon the right method.

A clause had come close to being inserted in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus prescribing that every Professed Father should teach catechism for forty days every year, which is a sufficient indication of the importance with which this work was regarded by Ignatius and his followers. Francis always acted in the matter as though he were bound by positive injunction, and he was the most successful of all catechists because of the novel mode he invented.

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With the adult population his methods, if very different, were equally original. Though when writing to Ignatius on September 20, 1542, Francis is full enthusiasm, and says that Goa is a wholly Christian city, with a fine cathedral, and a Franciscan monastery, and numerous churches, and therefore is a sight for sore eyes, he soon came to find how rotten things were under a brilliant exterior.

Nearly all his indignation was reserved for the rapacity and venality of the officials, and as time went on he grew more and more disheartened by the political cynicism that prevailed. But he had also to deal with the licentiousness of the Portuguese.

This was due, however, to the weakness of the flesh, and was accordingly dealt with more gently. Though concubinage was almost taken for granted, he found that the consciences of the people were not entirely hardened. These men were doing only what the majority did, and what was hardly regarded as wrong.

There was no use in denouncing them; rather they should be won by love. So he would exercise his fascination upon those whom he knew to be in need of correction.

Tursellinus describes his skilful way of managing matters. Francis would make the acquaintance of a man and then one day, upon meeting him in the street near the hour of *tiffin*, would smilingly ask whether a poor priest might invite himself to the meal. The two men would eat alone, for it was not customary for a man in Goa to introduce his women-folk to his friends.

At the conclusion of *tiffin* Francis would suggest that

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his host's children should be brought in. The Portuguese are always more than ordinarily fond and proud of their children, as he knew very well ; and as Francis had a way with children the father would be delighted at seeing them climb into his guest's lap to be fondled by him.

Finally he would venture upon something that nobody but he could have done without offence : he would ask if he might see the mother.

Again the current of his charm would be turned on, and he would praise her to his host : "She really is a lovely person, and of a sweet disposition. I should certainly have taken her for a Portuguese. And her children are well deserving of having a Portuguese for a father. How is that you do not marry her? Where could you expect to find a better wife?"

Many a time this method worked beautifully. But there were occasions when Francis, upon seeing that the woman belonged to one of the ill-favoured low castes, or was a negress, understood that so ill-assorted a marriage would be undesirable. Even were the man willing to regularize such a union, he would be sure before long to take a mistress from among the many attractive women available. Then Francis, being in all things very practical, would cry out in feigned horror as soon as the woman had gone, "Good God! what a monster! How can you endure this ugly creature? How can you have children by her? Now follow my advice : get rid of her and look for someone who is more worthy to be your wife." That method also often worked well.

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There was now the question of how to induce the people to go more regularly to the sacraments. He therefore wrote to Ignatius asking him to try and secure from the Pope a plenary indulgence for all those who went to confession and communion on any of the feasts of Our Lady. This, as he points out, would prove of great service in increasing devotion towards her. The Portuguese, as he had discovered, were of all nations the one that most valued indulgences from Rome ; so this was to be a way of attracting people to receive the Eucharist. Besides, he goes on, India is in a special position : the number of lay Christians is altogether out of proportion to the number of available priests. And the lay community was constantly increasing through the baptism of converts. So everything possible should be done to enable them to practice their religion and fulfil its obligations without undue inconvenience.

For the same reason he wrote to Rome asking if an arrangement could be made to let India have a different season for Lent than the one observed in Europe. He pointed out that because summer in India falls at the time of winter in Christendom, Lent was a period of intense heat, during which it was difficult to fast. (The force of this argument is not very apparent, and was not accepted.) A better reason advanced in the same letter for transferring Lent to June and July is that the time of Lent was generally the one spent in military operations and in navigation. Therefore merchants and sailors and soldiers would get few chances for frequenting the sacraments then.

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The Goans would have very much liked to have kept Francis among them permanently, so he was offered the rectorship of their College of St. Paul of the Holy Faith. This had been founded shortly before his arrival and had been put under the direction of Diogo de Borba, a Franciscan who had become secularized. It was well endowed from the revenues of one of the local temples suppressed by the Portuguese, and it already had sixty students. Francis was so enthusiastic about its possibilities that in his letter of September 20, 1542, he said that he believed it would have three hundred within six years. Nevertheless he had no intention of being diverted from his missionary work, though he promised to ask Ignatius for a Jesuit who could take over the office that Borba was ready to resign to a better qualified man.

Among the conditions of the endowment were that only natives should be admitted as students, and that they should be at least thirteen years old. The intention was to develop from among them an indigenous clergy. Many of these hopes were disappointed. Some native priests were, indeed, ordained, but they appear to have been, for the most part, unsatisfactory.

A large part of the trouble lay in the provision that the students were to be thirteen before they could be accepted. The climate of India induces such precocity that of those who enrolled more than a few had already acquired vicious habits, and were a source of contamination to others who were still innocent. But though the administration of the college always was something of a

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disappointment and a problem, it did a remarkable work, and is still in existence.⁷

During the five months that Francis had been at Goa, he had achieved great things. Everywhere there was apparent a vast improvement in moral conditions, and the awakening of genuine religious fervour had been brought about in many hearts. The system of catechizing had become well established, and was being extended elsewhere. Attendance at the hospitals, the prisons, and the lazaret-house was now regular. Diogo de Borba continued at the college. The presence of Francis was no longer necessary.

He had not come out to work among the Portuguese but among the heathen. If he had stayed at Goa so long it was only because he had expected Camerino and Mansilhas to arrive in early September from Mozambique. The month was now dragging to its close and there was still no sign of them. Francis began to be impatient.

He was eager to depart, to come into direct contact with the heathen, to preach Christ where none had ever heard His name. A great harvest of souls was to be won on the Comorin coast six hundred miles to the southeast. At the end of September he decided to wait no longer. The Governor promised to send on Camerino and Mansilhas after him as soon as they arrived.

For his equipment Francis needed little. His Breviary, a Missal, the vessels and vestments for Mass could all be

⁷ But on a different site. Pyrard de Laval, who writes of conditions early in the seventeenth century, estimates that there were more than 3000 students at the college in his time. (Hakluyt Soc. trans., p. 96.)

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packed into a satchel. His old cassock being now threadbare, and being besides unsuitable for the Indian climate, he had adopted the dress of the native priests—a sleeveless robe of black cotton known as a *loba*. Not yet had missionaries in tropical countries taken to white.

He waved away the offer of a pair of new shoes. With a little patching the old ones would do. But he had had enough experience of the fierce Indian sun to be aware that some protection for his head was absolutely essential. As the modern *topee* of pith, falling well over the nape of the neck as a protection against sunstroke, had not been invented, he provided himself with a leathern umbrella. That was all he needed.

Taking with him three Tamil students from the college (one of them was in deacon's orders, the others were catechists) to serve as interpreters, he set sail for Cape Comorin. At last, at last, he was to preach to the heathen.



CHAPTER VIII

AT THE PEARL FISHERIES

DURING the sixteenth century the eastern shore from Cape Comorin, the apex of the triangle which is India, as far as the ridge of shoals between India and Ceylon known as Adam's Bridge, was the greatest pearl fishery of the world.

To those engaged in the actual work of diving for the oysters, it does not, however, seem to have brought much wealth : for they were cynically exploited by others. They were known as the Paravas, a caste sufficiently low, though not of the very lowest.

About the time of the arrival of the Portuguese, there was added to the exactions of the local rajahs the rapacity of Moslem traders, who shamelessly cheated them. They suffered these things with patience—for like all the Hindus, particularly those of southern India, they were an exceedingly mild people—until an incident occurred that precipitated war.

Like most causes of war, this one was, in itself, nothing very great. Every Tamil baby girl has the lobes of her ears pierced and gradually, throughout her childhood, enlarged by leaden weights in readiness for the large showy ear-rings she wears from the day of her marriage. A

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ruffianly Moslem, in an attempt to rob a Parava woman of her most cherished possessions, had torn her ear. An enraged mob instantly killed him, and proceeded to massacre all Moslems within reach.

Reprisals were made, and the poor Paravas, who were of anything but a warlike temper, were decisively worsted. In their plight they decided to put themselves under the protection of the Portuguese. Seventy of the village headmen accordingly went to Cochin where they were baptized and where they promised, on behalf of their oppressed people, that all of them would become Christians.

A fleet under the command of Sousa, the man who afterwards became Governor, was sent against the Moslems and destroyed their fleet. Michael Vaz, the Vicar-General of Goa, then landed with Diogo de Borba and a group of Franciscans. At their hands twenty thousand Paravas were baptized and became, as Christians, subjects of Portugal.

Nothing could be done at that time to instruct this multitude in their new religion, for none of the priests knew a word of Tamil. An official was stationed at Tuticorin to collect the royal tribute, but to the Paravas Christianity meant nothing more than a guarantee of protection against their enemies. They went on worshipping as before at the wayside shrines, utterly ignorant of the most elementary principles of their nominal faith.

There was, however, the intention of doing something for these people as soon as it was possible. Once a year, at Easter, a few priests would be sent from Cochin to say Mass for them, and to baptize the children. And at the

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college at Goa several Tamil-speaking students were studying, one of whom was well advanced on the way to the priesthood. As soon as these young men were ready for the work, they were to go as missionaries to their own caste. But eight years had passed, and still the Paravas were without the Gospel.

In October 1542 Francis Xavier, accompanied by his Tamil interpreters, landed at Cape Comorin, and proceeded north along the coast to Tuticorin. His purpose was two-fold : to baptize those who were still pagans, and to instruct all the people in the Christian faith.

He found stretching east of the Ghats a country flat and parched, but where sparse crops of rice and millet and *cholum* and chillies were raised in the fields that were so painfully irrigated from the sickly tanks. Sad-visaged men, naked except for a loin-cloth, toiled there in the pitiless sun, and lean, brown, bright-eyed boys threw stones and shouted to scare away the parrots. Only on the white beaches, when the catamarans, packed with divers, were pushed off into the sea, or returned with their cargo of pearls, was there any animation.

Here and there a springless *vandi* toiled along the rough roads that were lined with the many-rooted banyan trees, the sleepy driver digging his goad into the rumps of the humped, long-horned oxen that were somnolently dragging it along.

Patches of plantains rose and swayed like green feathers loaded with golden fruit ; and clustered by the villages were clumps of coconut palms and limes. Mango and tamarind trees — these with enormous bats called flying-

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foxes (which are very good eating) hanging asleep among their branches — dotted the plains. But most of the trees were twisted thorn, and the graceful palmyra-palm which serves such a variety of useful purposes in southern India.

The towns were few and small. Yet even in their poor bazaars Francis could have seen jewellers' and brass-workers' stalls ablaze. A crowd would be gathered there around a conjurer, or a snake-charmer to whose shrill, droning music the hooded cobra swayed. The sacred cows, conscious of their privileged position, wandered nonchalantly down every street, or lay to take their ease wherever it suited them. These, though sacred, were scrawny, for there was little grass for them to eat on the sun-blistered plains.

There the streams went dry in the summer, and little grew beside them except prickly-pears and aloes and a cactus that had a sap like milk. Crows followed the herds for their droppings. At night yellow pariah dogs in concert with the jackals howled under the moon.

The sun dropped about six in the afternoon like a thunderbolt from heaven, giving no twilight; but no sunsets are so gorgeous as those behind the mountains of Travancore. Then came out fireflies, larger than any known in Europe or America, fluttering in myriads. And in the skies burned the Indian stars.

Francis must often have passed heathen temples, magnificently sculptured with scenes of the utmost indecency. Doves built in their niches and pouter-pigeons strutted with the Brahmins in their courts. Everywhere there

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were monkeys, but especially in the towns and temples, for these, like the cows, were sacred animals.

The villages were only collections of mud huts, thatched with straw or palm leaves. On their walls cakes of cow-dung were plastered to dry. These were used, when charcoal ran low, for fuel ; and mixed with water they were stirred into a thin paste which, strange as it may seem, kept the mud floors fresh and cool.

Everywhere there was poverty ; and despite the frequency with which the people bathed, it was almost impossible to escape from fleas and bed-bugs. A frequent sight was that of a row of women, sitting one behind the other, each searching for lice in her neighbour's hair. It was a point of politeness to hand the little creature, when caught, to its owner for execution.

Huge grey rats came out at night in search of grain, and mosquitoes in swarms for human blood. There were poisonous insects, too, scorpions and centipedes of which one had to beware ; and worse than these, deadly snakes. The cobras were large enough to be avoided, but there were small snakes which were all the more dangerous because of being so small. On the other hand, on those bare plains there were few tigers, and probably none at all along the coast.

Everywhere Francis went he must have seen in the blighted fields stakes each with an earthenware *chatti*, spotted with whitewash, turned upside-down over its top. When he enquired their purpose he was told that the shrine he had just passed on some little mound or

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under a grove had, as he must have observed, a circle of life-sized clay horses. According to popular superstition, the deity to whom the place was dedicated was in the habit of taking equestrian exercise at night. Woe to the peasant, delayed in his paddy-field, who encountered him! The spotted *chatti* was a charm against his malign power.

Then there were festivals in the pagan villages. A triumphal car was brought out and dragged along to the frenzied music and songs in honour of the goddess Kali whose image was being borne in a moveable temple of wood. Sometimes the worshippers in a sublime excess of religious enthusiasm would hurl themselves under the heavy wheels to be crushed to death.

Fakirs sat naked upon their beds of spikes, or held up their arms until they became fixed in that position, or clasped their hands until their finger-nails grew through their palms. As special manifestations of piety, devotees would allow themselves to be swung around a pole on hooks fastened into their flesh to the delirious plaudits of the crowd.

Hardly any of these things are mentioned in the eager, unstudied, unliterary, and yet so vivid letters Francis wrote. He was no mere traveller, interested in the curious and the unexpected; from first to last he recorded only such things as were concerned with his work among the Paravas. If from one point of view his letters are disappointing, from another they are extraordinarily revealing—all the more so because there is in them not the slightest attempt to tell us anything about a certain Basque *hidalgo* who was a Master of Arts and a professor at the

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University of Paris. Even his reticence about picturesque India is revealing. He could not spare the time to describe its customs, because there were people waiting to be baptized and to be instructed. What few precious hours he could snatch from his work were given to prayer. His very omissions, therefore, show his selflessness, his ardent love for God, his relentless determination to bring the heathen to the feet of Christ.

Had he ever witnessed a *suttee*, however, surely he would have mentioned it. At least it must have been something of which he had heard, though it was comparatively rare in southern India.¹ It was regarded as the supreme offering of which a woman was capable, and held in the highest esteem. The practice called for a heroism of which few were capable, and its prevalence has probably been much exaggerated. Seldom was it found outside of the highest castes.

Francis, however, must often have seen young girls, as well as old women, dressed in the life-long white mourning for their dead husbands, their heads shorn, their bodies divested of every trace of ornamentation, expiating by their perpetual widowhood some sin committed in a former incarnation.

So, too, he must have seen many a bride of ten—tiny, bewildered, bedizened, and crushed—beside her lanky husband of forty. This probably would not have seemed so horrible to him as it does to us, for in Europe at that time girls were commonly married as soon as they were marriageable. But he must have been shocked by the

¹ Cf. Dubois, pp. 360-1 (footnote).

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eroticism everywhere, in the very atmosphere one breathed, in the emblems by the road-side, practiced with elaborate depravity in the shrines of the temples, and depicted with the utmost frankness in the sculptures over their portals. Yet even about all this he says nothing.

Everywhere was the figure of the pot-bellied, elephant-headed Ganesha ; everywhere the idols of Siva and Kali. Siva appealed mainly to the Brahminical caste who wore his emblem—three strokes uniting as one—upon their foreheads, where Kali was adored by the illiterate mass, though it would be an error to suppose that the Brahmins in the least discountenanced her worship. Benign of face, four-handed, and smeared with blood, she was sometimes represented as treading upon the prostrate body of her husband, sometimes as riding upon a tiger. Once a year she demanded the sacrifice of a wife pregnant for the first time, and though Hindu ingenuity was as a rule fully equal to getting around that particular demand, it was recognized that to placate the ferocious deity a desperate offering had to be made. Is there any wonder that Francis regarded Hinduism as nothing but a cup brimming with horrors ? It is perhaps for this reason that he thought silence best.

Since a great many of the Paravas were already baptized, the first thing to do was to baptize the rest. The general meaning of the act could be explained by the interpreters. Instruction in Christian doctrine would have to be deferred until Francis had learned something of the language.

In his shabby *loba*, and barefoot (for his shoes soon

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wore out), he went from village to village over the burning plains. At each place he stood under his umbrella baptizing all day long until his arms ached, while one of his Tamil assistants made out with a stylus upon a strip of palmyra-palm the certificate of baptism. In one month he baptized ten thousand people, and in all during this mission in southern India he must have baptized thirty thousand. His conversion of the Paravas, as is pointed out by Père Lhande, is the only instance of an entire caste being brought into the Church.²

This procedure has been subject to a good deal of criticism. Some Protestant missionaries have even said that Francis administered baptism by merely sprinkling the crowd as is done at the *Asperges* during High Mass. This though a valid form of baptism (so long as there is a certainty of each person being touched by the water) is illicit in Canon Law. There is not the slightest evidence that Francis ever departed from the regular mode.

Criticism on this point may be dismissed as grotesquely misinformed. Somewhat weightier is the objection that the baptisms were altogether too hurried, that they were often administered with very little of the preliminary instruction which is considered necessary. It is said that the converts did not know what they were doing; that they regarded baptism as a magical rite; and the preposterous suggestion is sometimes added that perhaps even Francis regarded it in that light.

Francis would have wished for a period of preparation for his catechumens, and whenever it was possible, always

² *L'Inde Sacrée*, p. 129.

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did instruct his converts thoroughly before baptism. But it was not possible in this case ; time did not permit it. All that could be done was to baptize ; to tell the converts what were the fundamental articles of Christian belief ; to give them the Ten Commandments ; to teach them a few prayers ; and to arrange for priests and catechists to settle among them.

It should be remembered that the intellectual capacity of these people was low. They could be taught the Creed, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary in a few days. To have made them grasp much more about the Christian mysteries would have taken years. But the fact of sin — they could be made to understand that. They could be taught that hell waited for sinners ; they could be taught to ask pardon from God, and to invoke the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph at the hour of death.

It may be that some of them did attach a magical meaning to baptism, as they probably never had more than a vague idea as to what was meant by the doctrines of the Triune Godhead, or of the two natures in the single personality of Christ. But that was no reason for depriving these poor souls of the sacraments. Ignorance and intellectual deficiency are no barriers to God. Surely grace could be counted upon to do its work in their hearts.

Fortunately for all of us, God does not judge other than justly, or expect of any man more than he can offer. If the minds of the Paravas remained dim, if their morals were far from exemplary, it may nevertheless be true that their simplicity and willingness to learn made them more

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acceptable in the all-seeing eye of Heaven than are many college graduates of the strictest respectability. It is gross impertinence for us to criticize Francis in this matter. He was a man aflame with love for God and for souls. He did all that he could do—and much more than anybody else could have done.

These people, it must be remembered, had never known anything but the most degraded form of popular Hinduism. Brahminical philosophy would have been entirely unintelligible to them, as it still is to the overwhelming mass of Indians. A crude polytheism, largely mixed with necromancy and devil-worship, was what they had been brought up upon. The Brahmins did not consider the lower castes capable of anything else, nor did they wish them to have anything else. By making their mysteries esoteric, they could keep the *sudras* in their place.

To the illiterate masses, therefore, religion was merely a matter of abject and irrational fear. Francis brought them the Gospel of a God of love who had died for them, and he pointed them to Mary who would intercede for them as a Mother. However imperfect his method of instruction at this time may have been, there is no question about its practical effectuality in bringing hope and some ray of the light divine to those who had hitherto lived in utter darkness.

As in Goa, he gave most of his time to the children, all of whom loved the tall, bearded young man with the far-away look in his eyes and the grace of God visible upon his face. Writing to Ignatius on October 28th from Tuticorin, just a month after his arrival, he tells how the

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children followed him everywhere. They would not let him sleep, or eat, or say his Office—so importunate were they to be taught some prayers. “Then I began to understand,” he says, “that of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

How he managed to teach them anything at all a month after his arrival we are not informed. But he may well have begun to learn Tamil before leaving Goa, and may have picked up more since getting among the Paravas. Since then he had heard no word of anything except Tamil. Probably he had not got much further than the memorizing of a set speech. He himself relates that there were occasions when he had to fall back upon signs.

The early biographers tell us that he possessed the Gift of Tongues. This is not borne out by his own letters, for we always find him making a great effort to learn the language in which he had to preach. Though he probably never learned to speak any of them well, he appears to have had remarkable linguistic talents. Already at his command were Basque, Spanish, French, Latin, Greek, Italian, and Portuguese, every one of which (with the exception of Greek) he had learned by speaking it and not from a book. Of course, intermittently a miracle may have occurred ; more likely his gift of tongues was a quite natural one, though correctly to be described as marvellous.

We find him giving an account of his studies in the letter written from Cochin to the Society at Rome and dated January 15, 1544. Making Tuticorin his headquarters, he gathered there the native Christians who struck him as being those best instructed in their religion, and

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with their aid and that of the interpreters he spent the better part of three months in making a translation of the Credo, the Paternoster, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the Confiteor. To these prayers he added an instruction on what it meant to be a Christian, on heaven and hell, and on what sort of people went to each place.³ A work of translation done under such difficulties, could hardly have been otherwise than inexact. Later Francis revised his own Tamil catechism, and Enriquez, the compiler of the first Tamil grammar, retouched it still further. But Robert de' Nobili found it so barbarous as to express the opinion that it was one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the Gospel among educated Indians.⁴ It was however the best that Francis could do, and it is wonderful that he should have been able to do it at all.

His mission was primarily to the nominal Christians of the Fishery Coast, but from time to time he came into contact with the Brahmins, about whom he had already learned something during his stay at Goa. He soon felt the effects of their opposition. "Were it not for this," he writes to the Society at Rome, "we should have all the people embracing the religion of Christ."

His opinion of the priestly caste was not very high. There was not, as M. Bellesort says, in the whole of India anyone who was less a Brahmin than himself.⁵ Nobleman and scholar as he was, there were no untouchables for him. The most destitute of Pariahs was a soul of such

³ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, pp. 279-280, 286.

⁴ Cf. Brou, vol. 1, p. 198.

⁵ Page 104.

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immeasurable value that it had been purchased with the blood of Christ.

He had therefore no patience with the Brahmins. They are liars and cheats to the core, he says, their one idea being how to exploit the ignorance of the common herd. When they announce that the gods demand certain offerings to be made, you may be sure that these are the things the Brahmins need for their own use.

The Brahmins' defence was that they had no other patrimony than the service of religion, and that everywhere the priest lives by the altar. But Francis was not at all inclined to listen to this argument. In the first place their religion was false, and he could not believe that the Brahmins thought otherwise. In the second place, they gave nothing in return, but were insolent and rapacious beyond all bearing.

To the arrogance of their priesthood these men added the sublime impudence of caste.⁶ They were from birth a race apart, and it was impossible for any outsider ever to be admitted into their rank. So holy were they, that the mere shadow of one of a lower caste falling upon them was a contamination.

Yet, as Francis soon perceived, such holiness had no relation to ordinary morality. Instead it was conserved by ceremonial bathing in the temple tanks, by the sacred

⁶ The Abbé Dubois offers as extenuation of the system his belief that ancient India did not lapse into a state of barbarism simply and solely because of the distribution of the people into castes (pp. 28-9). This exact observer also remarks that there is no Hindu custom, however unimportant and simple, or filthy and disgusting, but rests upon some religious principle or other (p. 31).

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thread worn by Brahmins from shoulder to waist, and by the caste marks upon their foreheads. Their initiation and the careful observance of the complex ritual of religion set them upon an unapproachable pinnacle of sanctity and withering pride. Nothing could be further from his own ideal.

He freely denounced them to the Paravas, who had been brought up in grovelling subservience to them ; and the Brahmins were naturally very much annoyed. They could not understand why Francis did not follow the principle of live and let live. He was in the same line of business as themselves, and at first they appear to have accorded him a wondering reverence, as to an eccentric *sunyasi*. They flattered him, and they gave him presents. When he promptly returned these as though they were bribes for his silence, they regarded themselves as insulted.

He found them, he says, as a rule very ignorant. One day he went into the famous temple at Trichendur where two hundred Brahmins gathered around the Christian ascetic, about whom they had heard so much. We have his account of what took place, something of course given from his own point of view, but vividly told.

When he asked them to inform him what their religion enjoined as necessary to salvation, a venerable priest of over eighty was put forward as their spokesman. The wily old man tried to hedge—or perhaps the question had little meaning for him—and asked instead what commands the God of the Christians laid upon them.

Francis, however, insisted upon first getting an answer to his question. Then the aged Brahmin said that the

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two main religious duties were to abstain from killing cows, and to show honour to Brahmins. It may have been that this Brahmin was really as ignorant as Francis took him to be ; but it may merely have been that he thought this enough of an answer to one who was not an initiate.

This at once put Francis's fiery blood up. So in his bad Tamil he gave them an exposition of the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. At the conclusion of the sermon, everybody acknowledged that all his statements had accorded with reason, and that there was no doubt that Christianity was the true religion. This, of course, was little more than politeness. The Brahminical tolerance would freely assent to the proposition that Christianity was true—that every religion, for that matter, was true. These subtle and ingenious minds found no difficulty in reconciling all possible contradictions.

It is easy to picture the scene—the temple tank, surrounded by its colonnades ; the bats hanging head-downwards, asleep in the shadows ; the mass of the temple rising tier above tier into the sunlight, intricately carved everywhere with grotesque obscenities ; and in the quiet court the wasted figure of the Jesuit confronting, crucifix in hand, the white-robed Brahmins. He saw their smooth, insolent faces, and noted how they flaunted upon their shaven foreheads the phallic emblem. We must not say that looking upon them he despaired of ever winning them, but he decided that he could work with more profit among the humble and the poor.

Only one Brahmin was ever converted by him, and he

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became one of the catechists appointed to every village where there was no priest. Another Brahmin he nearly converted, and of this man he gives an account.

He was, writes Francis to the Society at Rome, of all the Brahmins encountered the only one who was a man of learning. He had studied at a famous "academy" (probably the Brahminical school at Madura). Though they were required by their oaths never to reveal their mysteries, he nevertheless said he would tell them to Francis. One of these mysteries was that only one God exists, the maker of heaven and earth, and that the idols are nothing but images of devils. Then he described their sacred books, written in a learned language, which contain their laws. But Francis impatiently breaks off with, "It would be a lengthy business to write out all he told me, and indeed not worth the trouble."

In return Francis, nothing loth, consented to give an account of the Christian mysteries. "I promise to keep it all secret," whispered the Brahmin, which provoked Francis to exclaim, "But I don't want you to keep it secret! In fact, I won't say another word unless you promise to tell others what I tell you."

The interview ended with the Brahmin asking Francis to make him a Christian without publishing the fact; but this of course was out of the question. And so, hoping for his conversion, Francis sadly left him. There is no record of the man ever having got any further towards the Church.⁷

By temperament Francis was not fitted to deal with

⁷ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, pp. 292-3.

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these tricky spiritual aristocrats. A century and a half later, however, a group of Jesuits under Robert de' Nobili, a nephew of Cardinal Bellarmine, went out to India, largely inspired by Francis's own work there, but with the intention of trying a new method.

They arrived at Madura, in the guise of *sunyasis*, already learned in Sanskrit. They wore the yellow robes of Hindu ascetics, and on their foreheads were the caste-marks of Siva (which they seem to have interpreted as an emblem of the Three Persons making up one God-head). Before them walked a servant with a long gold-headed cane.

They had at their command all the technical terms of Brahminical philosophy; they strictly observed all the rites of ceremonial bathing; they wore the sacred cord; they abstained from the flesh of the sacred cow. At their hands thousands of Brahmins accepted baptism, for this they took to be a further stage of initiation.⁸ How successful these later Jesuits were in absorbing Indian culture is shown by the fact that one of the most famous Tamil classics is the epic on the life of St. Joseph entitled *Tem-bavani* by Joseph Beschi.

Every possible accommodation was made for Hinduism; but after all, excellent as were de' Nobili's intentions, the "Malabar rites" had a look about them of pious deceit and were eventually condemned by Rome. All that remains of the brilliant experiment are a few communities of Christians near Madura who still observe (or who until

⁸ Dubois, who worked later in the same district, estimated the number at 100,000.

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recently observed) their caste distinctions, and refuse to associate with their fellow-Christians who spring from a lower order of society.

Francis Xavier was a man of an altogether different type. It could hardly be said of him, as Chateaubriand said of Augustine, and as we might say of de' Nobili and Beschi, that he pursued the pagan sects with their books in his hand. Probably he would have been scandalized at the accommodation practiced by his illustrious successors. And yet, though there is no doubt that the method of Francis was upon the whole sounder, as well as franker, than that of the "Malabar rites," there is a middle ground which Francis never attempted to find.

But, after all, it would have been useless, while working among the Paravas, to have tried to discover what elements of truth were contained in Brahmin philosophy, even had Francis not been a man conditioned by his time. He was of that Iberian stock that had with so much difficulty succeeded, only just before he was born, in breaking the power of Islam in Spain. He had no tolerance of heresy, no patience with paganism. What he had was a burning faith. All his furious energy was canalized. It would have been impossible for him to have done his appointed work had he been a student fascinated by the study of comparative religion. Everything was ignored by him except the passionate preaching of the Gospel to those who had never heard of Christ. As for heathenism, David's verse sufficed : *Dei gentium demonia*.

Nevertheless in the long letter written in January 1544 from Cochin to the Society at Rome about his work

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among the Paravas, he shows that he may have been thinking of doing something for the Brahmins when he exclaims : "How I should like to go through the universities of Europe shouting like a madman about the souls that are being lost. How many there are in such places who are thinking only of getting a high position in the Church through their reputation for learning, instead of using their acquirements for the common good. If only they would leave their miserable ambitions and say, 'Lord, here am I. Send me wherever Thou wilt—even to India!' how much better their own state would be when they come to die."

Who knew more thoroughly than Francis Xavier the emptiness of these ambitions ? It was just such a student, with these very objects in mind, that he had been not long before at the University of Paris. Nobody now saw more clearly than himself the real values of life, or less regretted the ecclesiastical preferment he had thrown away.

CHAPTER IX

NEW TRIALS, NEW TRIUMPHS

No LETTERS written by Francis Xavier between October 28, 1542, and January 15, 1544, have come down to us, and probably none were written. It is the period covered by his work among the Paravas, during which he was isolated from Goa.

During that time he went up and down the coast—though never, so far as we know, very far inland—and all the names that appear in the subsequent letters are those of Fishery villages : Tuticorin, Manapar, Alendale, Virandapatanam, Punical, Vaipar, Tricalur, Bembar, Combaturé.¹ The foundations were well laid. Catechists had been appointed for each village, whose duty it was to lead the prayers, to baptize the children, and to instruct the catechumens. Something now had to be done about securing funds for their support. It was necessary that Francis should see Sousa, the Governor, on this matter of business.

He had already heard that Paul de Camerino and Fran-

¹ This has sometimes been identified with the modern city of Coimbatore, northwest of Madura in the Carnatic. It is clear from the letters that Combaturé was on the Fishery Coast. Brou places it a league to the north of Virandapatanam. (Vol. I, p. 254, footnote.)

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cis Mansilhas had arrived at Goa about a month after he left. They were due to be assigned to their tasks. And Francis Coelho, the Tamil deacon who had been a useful assistant in the work among the Paravas, could be made still more useful by being ordained to the priesthood. It was probably in December that Francis, taking Coelho with him, left Tuticorin by one of the swiftly sailing native boats for Goa.

Letters were waiting for him there which informed him, to his great joy, that Ignatius had been elected General of the Society. Before leaving Italy, Francis had written out his form of profession in anticipation of this election. He now took his vows orally before the Bishop, and sent on a record of this in writing to Ignatius. A copy he kept for himself he wore in a little bag over his breast until the day of his death.

The necessary business was soon despatched. The college was seen to be in a flourishing condition, and Camerino was assigned to work in it. By the middle of January Francis was in Cochin, and by the beginning of February back at the Pearl Fisheries.

Francis Coelho, now ordained, went with him, also a Spanish priest named John Lizano, who had come out during 1543, and John Artiaga, an old soldier, who had recently been converted, but who was not to prove a very satisfactory lay-coadjutor. Mansilhas was also of the group. He would have been of no use at the college, and he could not be ordained, as it seemed impossible to knock enough theology into his stupid head ; but Francis

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thought he might nevertheless be of service among the Paravas.

From Cochin Francis wrote to Queen Catherine of Portugal a letter which has been lost, but the gist of which has been preserved for us by Tursellinus. Four hundred crowns a year had been set aside for her from the revenues of the Pearl Fisheries, and this sum was supposed to provide her Majesty with slippers. It was what we should call pin-money. Francis seems already to have persuaded the Governor to pay it over to him, so sure were they both that the pious Queen would gladly let him have it for the salaries of the *kanakapullai*, the catechists. In asking her permission to consent to what had been done, he reminded her that she could have no better shoes or slippers to climb into heaven than her charity towards the children of the Fishery Coast. For many years the Queen's Slipper Money was donated by her to the missions.

Francis soon found that his new converts were, in many instances, very frail men and women, and that they had to be strictly supervised. The roots of paganism were very far from being entirely destroyed among them, and time and time again he was shocked to hear that the Christians were still practicing idolatrous rites. Bartoli tells us that, on at least one occasion, in order to give an example by a method proportioned to their dull intelligences, Francis ordered a hut where idols had been set up to be burnt to the ground. Upon being entreated to allow at least a few sticks of furniture to be spared, he consented ; but the hut itself (which had cost hardly more

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than the labour which had gone to its making) was remorselessly burnt, and with it the idols. "Look at that and know," said Francis sternly to the trembling wretches around him, "that a fire far more terrible than this, unless you repent, will be the punishment of your infidelity."

Francis understood these people. Abstract argument would have been useless ; something palpable had to be provided. They were like naughty children who become like little angels after a sound spanking. The Abbé Perin, writing early in the nineteenth century, records how a minor rajah once said to him, "Father, you might live in this country twenty years without your zeal bearing fruit. It is because you try to persuade us only through argument. In order to make us good, it is necessary that blood should flow from our veins in equal measure to the instruction knocked into our heads. The Jesuits, when we had them directing us, knew how to bring this about ; therefore they could do with us whatever they pleased."²

So when Mansilhas wrote to Francis telling him that the women in Punical were getting drunk on *arack*, the fermented juice of the palmyra-palm (a very easily obtained intoxicant), an officer was sent with orders to punish with fines and three days' imprisonment any woman caught drinking. Francis knew as well as did Chaucer that "in women vinolent is no defence." It was hard enough to keep the softly sensual Tamils chaste without allowing drunkenness to complicate the problem. The practice of the Christian religion demands an unceasing struggle, and as M. Bellesort remarks, any kind of

² Quoted by Brou, vol. 1, p. 245.

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struggle was repugnant to the apathetic Parava temperament.⁸

As no other missionary has ever succeeded in doing, at any rate to the same extent, Francis got under the skin of these people. Gentle and docile, they responded to his ardent love. They knew that he asked nothing for himself ; that he lived as the poorest among them ; that his one meal a day consisted of a handful of rice and a little milk or water ; that he rarely took more than two or three hours of sleep, and then generally on the bare ground ; and that days of selfless labour were followed by nights of prayer. They knew, because there is little privacy in India. Try as he might to conceal his holiness, his tell-tale face turned to the skies, his characteristic gesture — the lifting up of his tattered gown to his heart — like his tremulous and impulsive ejaculations gave him away completely.

Everywhere he went he was followed by huge crowds. Sometimes there would be five or six thousand people present when he climbed up into a banyan tree to preach to them. Crowds equally large were present when he said Mass. Often he baptized a whole village at one time, first the men, then their wives and children. At the end of many a day his arms were sore from baptizing, or he had lost his voice from teaching the people the Creed and the Ten Commandments.

His Tamil had by now become very fluent, for he had heard nothing else for over a year. And we find him a little later correcting Mansilhas on a fine shade of mean-

⁸ Page 133.

ing. Though the correction itself was not quite correct, there is no doubt that Francis could always make himself sufficiently clear. The expression on his face, his eyes, the intonation of his voice—these were all eloquent.

At this time we get many reports of miracles. Unfortunately some of them can hardly be considered as reposing upon altogether satisfactory historical evidence. There was, for instance, the story told at the Process of Goa in 1556, of a boy at Combaturé being raised from the dead. One of the witnesses says explicitly that when he asked Diogo de Borba what truth there was in it, he got the answer that Francis had told him, “I raise anybody from the dead! A sinner like me! I told the boy to rise in the name of God, and the people made a story of it!”⁴ When the same incident was related at the Process of Cochin in the same year, a witness testified that when the child revived the excited people shouted, “A miracle!” whereupon Francis assured them that the child had not died.⁵ And Mansilhas, when called upon to testify, said he had heard the report and had asked Francis about it, but that the Saint had said the boy was not dead. It was his opinion, however, that this was merely Francis’s humility.⁶ Perhaps the best comment upon it all is that of a Tamil witness who said that Francis did perform miracles—in drawing people away from their sins.⁷ To this we may add that Teixeira, who knew Francis and wrote one of the best early lives, says in his letter to Riba-

⁴ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. II, p. 185.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 303.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 319.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 311.

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deneira (dated December 8, 1554), that though the report about miracles was common, he had not been able to verify any instance, and that others who had been working in India for a long time had also made enquiries, without being able to establish anything definite.⁸

What is certain is that the Paravas firmly believed him

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 805. It is worth noting that the evidence presented at the various Processes fills more than five hundred closely printed pages of the second volume of the *Monumenta Xaveriana*. The first enquiries began in 1556, but in 1616 witnesses were still being examined. By then they were very old people, whose memories may have begun to fail or to be distorted by fantasies, and there were others who could offer testimony only at second or third hand. But there was a vast crowd of them, and they cannot all be dismissed as dotards or liars.

Moreover, the method of procedure was much better than that prevailing in the law-courts of the time, where the absurdity of confessions wrung from the accused under torture was accepted as valid. There was here no pressure of either fear or favour brought to bear upon the witnesses.

It is not of course *de fide* that even the miracles mentioned in the Bull of Canonization or the Breviary actually occurred — though it would be rash for a Catholic to reject miracles that have been solemnly approved by the Church. It is *de fide*, however, as it is also of reason, that the postulate of a personal God admits the possibility of miracles. God is certainly constrained by metaphysical law, but to say that He cannot suspend physical law involves a contradiction in terms.

My position with regard to the miracles recorded of Francis Xavier is briefly this : I believe that he did perform miracles ; the accumulation of the reports is much too impressive to be set aside as a whole. But his times were not critical, and a good deal of the evidence that formerly passed muster would today hardly endure the scrutiny of the papal official named by a pleasant ecclesiastical joke the *Advocatus Diaboli*.

Further, some of the happenings which seem most securely substantiated are susceptible of a purely natural explanation — like the case of the drowned boy brought back to life. At the same time it would be well to reflect that very few miracles are capable of sustaining that sort of criticism which gives itself an air of profundity by the easy device of playing with conjectural explanations.

Finally we must remember that whatever miracles occur are performed only by God. There is no necessary connexion between sanctity and the miraculous — though miracles are rightly regarded as one of the proofs of sanctity. Some saints have miracles recorded of them, others have none. In any event, the supreme miracle is sanctity itself.

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to be a worker of miracles, a saint—a saint because they believed he worked miracles, a worker of miracles because they believed him a saint. The hour had now come when they were to run to him like terrified children.

Suddenly, out of a clear sky, rumbled the alarming news that the Badages, a warlike tribe from the state of Madura, were riding towards the Fishery Coast, burning the villages and slaughtering the inhabitants.⁹ The miserable Paravas, who had suffered so much at the hands of the Moslems, and who were not being particularly well treated by the Portuguese officials, were obliged to take refuge on the barren islands off the coast ; and there they were dying of hunger. Francis at once set off to their assistance.

On the way he encountered a raiding-party. Alone, crucifix in hand, he advanced to meet them. So great was the force of his prestige, and so great the cowardice of the ruffians, that they dared not lift a finger against him. They gave out to their commander wild stories of having met a man of gigantic height, with fire round his head and fire flashing from his eyes. What could they do but retreat before such an apparition ?

At Manapar Francis fitted out twenty native boats with supplies for those dying upon the islands. But it was impossible to make headway against the raging monsoon, and in the end he was obliged to return to Manapar. There he gathered as best he could the remnants of his

⁹ The name of the tribe is so spelled in all the biographies. In this spelling all English readers will mispronounce it. They were the Vadakars (in Tamil *Vadagars*), which word should be accented on the second syllable.

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flock about him. Many of them were quite destitute, and all of them quite helpless. It was touching to see how comforted they were by his serene faith and courage, how sure they were that with him they would be safe.

At times, however, Francis could not refrain from expressing his impatience with the shiftlessness of the Paravas. In his letter to Mansilhas, dated August 3, 1544, he instructs him to be sure and impress upon the people the necessity for having sentinels posted to give warning of the approach of the Badages, and to have boats ready on the shore. "But even after you have told them all this," he says, "don't put any confidence in their doing what you tell them. Only too well do I know their laziness and hopeless stupidity. So you must make yourself responsible for their safety."

Yet he could not but pity their sufferings. He describes the appalling scenes he has witnessed—the fields covered with corpses, the wounded left unattended, the aged trying to drag themselves along, and women being confined on the public roads. "If you had seen these things your heart would have been wrung. I have taken all the poor to Manapar."

Paralyzed and bewildered with fear, they were unable to do anything for themselves. But their afflictions were teaching the people to pray. "Fear," concludes Francis, "is a great teacher of prayer."

If the Badage brigands had been all that Francis had to contend with, matters would not have been so bad. Unfortunately, some of the Portuguese officials, whose duty it was to defend the Paravas, were using the raids

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as an opportunity for obtaining private gain. The callous cynicism of this is almost beyond belief ; in at least one instance it was proved.

The case was that of Cosmo de Piave, Commandant at Tuticorin. This debased creature was selling horses to the Badage warriors at a handsome profit. But in some way he over-reached himself, probably because he could not play even the game of treachery straight, and had "double-crossed" the Badages. In their rage they burnt his house and his ship, so that to save his life he had to row out to one of the islands where he was in danger of starving to death.

Francis wrote to Mansilhas disclosing the man's infamy, yet showing at the same time his own charity. Piave had written him an abusive letter in which, among other things, he said that he could not without scandal mention all the harm Francis had brought upon him. One gathers from this that he had succeeded in persuading himself that the burning of his house and ship had been at Francis's instigation. "However," the letter to Mansilhas continues, "this is no time for defending myself. As I do not think any good purpose would be served if I went to him in his present frame of mind, I wish you would go with all dispatch to help him. Go before it is too late, for the plight of the Commandant calls upon us to show mercy and charity." As a year later, on April 7, 1545, we find Francis threatening to delate Piave to the Inquisition unless he will desist from hindering the conversion of the heathen, the man was evidently beyond redemption.

It was the conduct of men like Piave that drove Fran-

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cis at times almost to the verge of despair. He expostulated with them and, when that failed, he reported them to the Governor at Goa—all to no purpose. It was extremely hard to bring them to account, for though Sousa did his best to restrain the rapacity of his underlings, the local officials continued to behave pretty much as they pleased.

As early as March 1544 Francis had written to Mansilha of his disgust with the Portuguese. Their conduct he saw to be the greatest of all obstacles to missionary work in India. Because of this Francis had already begun to turn over in his mind the idea of leaving India and going to Ethiopia—to whose king, it will be remembered, he had a letter from the Pope. There at least he would not have to contend with the scandal given by Europeans. His blood was boiling when he wrote, for on that very day news had come of the rape of several slave girls committed by some Portuguese at Punical.

Again and again in the letters written about this time Francis gives vent to his indignation with the officials. Thus, writing to Simon Rodriguez in January 1545, he denounces their greed. "Nobody can count," he exclaims, "the devices they have for theft, or the number of pretexts under which they commit it! I have never ceased wondering at the number of new inflexions they have added to the conjugation of the verb *to rob*."

It is very easy to understand the depression that at such times overwhelmed Francis. He seemed to be fighting a hopeless battle, in which his chief foes were those who professed the faith of Christ. There can be no doubt

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that there were moments when he felt like giving up the struggle.

But however he felt about it, he never did give up the struggle. As a Jesuit under obedience (which he took in so thorough-going a style that he wrote his letters to Ignatius upon his knees) he understood perfectly that he was not free to abandon India until he was instructed to do so by the General of the Society. He would, however, have been free to have gone on a mission to Ethiopia, in order to seek temporary relief there from the stench of a corruption that had become too sickening. If he did not go it was because he never allowed any revulsions of personal feeling to influence his decisions. The moment it was made clear to him that his presence was needed in India, he decided to remain.

The Badages turned out to be the providential instrument for keeping him there a little longer.

It happened in this way. The raids of the horsemen from Madura were part of a sporadic Indian war whose object was the control of Tinnevely and the Fishery Coast. The Rajah of Travancore had annexed the district in 1544, and the Rajah of Madura, feeling himself threatened, struck at a moment of confusion. Alarmed by the depredations of the Badage cavalry, the Rajah of Travancore sought an alliance with the Portuguese power, offering as part of the "deal" to allow any of his subjects who chose to do so to become Christians.

There had already been some missionary work in his territories, though this had received a set-back because of the behaviour of the Portuguese. Several letters writ-

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ten to Mansilhas during March 1544 give an account of the particular offence which had aroused the Rajah's resentment. One of his slaves had been arrested by a Portuguese officer and taken in chains to Tuticorin. Though no name is mentioned, it seems likely that the man who caused the trouble was again Cosmo de Piave. "How we do misuse our strength!" wrote Francis when he heard of it. "We spare our enemies and rob our friends. This act makes it impossible for me to establish friendly relations with the King of Travancore." It is, by the way, in the letter which tells about this high-handed proceeding that Francis first mentions his idea of leaving India for Ethiopia.

He might have gone had not the Badage invasion occurred only a few months later. That kept him in India to look after his distressed Paravas. By the time the Badage tide was receding the Rajah of Travancore was anxious to enter into an alliance with Portugal, and willing to open his territory to missionaries.

Therefore about the middle of November Francis, accompanied by a layman named John Vaz, set out on foot for Travancore.

Across the great plain that stretches from the Fishery Coast to the Western Ghats they trudged. It was a bare waste at the best of times; now many evidences were to be seen of the destructiveness of the Badages. And the journey was full of dangers.

These, however, Francis rather welcomed than otherwise, for he cherished the ambition (the only one now left him) of dying a martyr's death. He nearly did.

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Once he was wounded by an arrow. Another night he escaped only by hiding in a tree. On yet another night his bed was set on fire.

When they reached the mountains, fresh dangers awaited them. For here they had to pass through dense jungles, infested with tigers, the small, fierce Indian bears, and (perhaps worst of all) wild boars. It is characteristic of Francis that he never makes any allusions to his dangers, and that whenever he mentions the hardships of his life it is not with the intention of exciting sympathy for himself, but merely to let his fellow-Jesuits know what should be expected by the men they send out to the missions.

We have no account of Francis's interview with the Rajah of Travancore, except a laconic sentence left us by John Vaz.¹⁰ But we know the mission was highly successful, for though Francis could promise nothing more than that he would listen to whatever proposals were made and submit them to the Governor, the Rajah was so eager to win Portuguese protection that he gave Francis full liberty to make conversions. A magnificent oriental gesture was added: it was proclaimed throughout Travancore that Francis was to be officially known as the "Great Father," and to be held as the brother of the Rajah. Money and clothing were given for distribution among the poor, and funds for the erection of two churches.

¹⁰ Francis always alludes to the Rajah as the "King of Travancore" or "Iniquitribirim." He was not, strictly speaking, a king, however, and his name was Udaya-Marthanda-Varna. *Iniquitribirim* was an approximation to *ennaku-tamburan* which means "our king."

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Francis was no doubt well aware that the mass conversions which followed left something to be desired. He had already seen among the Paravas how difficult it is to eradicate all the virus of paganism from the newly-baptized. Yet, as before, he expected to supply what was lacking by later instructions.

In any event there were the children — they were always his great hope. They could be brought up from infancy knowing nothing but the faith of Christ. In view of the very high rate of mortality, he always had babies baptized, whenever this was possible, on the day of their birth. It gave him great joy to think of the thousands of children, made Christians by him, who had died before they reached the age of reason. Of their parents he would hope for the best ; of these innocent children he could be perfectly sure. There they were in heaven, thousands of them, praying for him.

There was in Travancore what may have been a further aid, but what may, on the other hand, have been a detriment. In the strip of land between the mountains and the Indian Ocean were communities of Christians who claimed to be the descendants of the converts of the Apostle Thomas, who had established seven churches among them before being martyred at Mylapore in the year 68.

However this may have been, the first Christians of Travancore, after struggling under difficulties for several years, were re-evangelized by a bishop and a group of priests from Asia Minor. From these they obtained the

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semi-Nestorian theology and Syrian liturgy and discipline which are theirs to the present day.

Probably these Christian communities had very little effect in any way upon the Hindus surrounding them. Francis makes scant mention of them, for his mission was to the heathen, not to Christian schismatics. It was always his method to accept the most pressing task, and to ignore incidental things lest they should distract him.

Among the Macua caste,¹¹ the fishermen of the coast, his success was sensational. He followed the same technique previously used among the Paravas, again baptizing until his arms ached, and teaching the Macuas the Credo and their prayers until his voice gave out. The men came to him first in a body. Point by point, he would go over the articles of Faith, stopping at each point to ask if this was fully believed.¹² In unison they bowed with their arms crossed upon their chests, and cried, "We believe."

After this a line would be formed, and each man in turn baptized and given his new name scratched upon a strip of palmyra-palm. The same method was followed with the women and children. Their certificates were treasured almost as though they were passports into heaven. Always, after the baptisms, Francis considered it of the utmost importance that they gathered together all the idols of the village, whether of stone or brass or wood or clay, and smashed them to pieces.

¹¹ *Matchua* is the Sanskrit word for fisherman.

¹² In Father Coleridge (vol. II, pp. 318-340) we have a translation of the catechetical scheme employed by Francis.

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In the series of letters written by Francis to Mansilhas during 1544-5, we are enabled to see what were the practical problems of missionary work in India at that time. Yet it has always been something of a mystery why Francis unbosomed himself to such an unpromising assistant. For the man was stupid, and was later discharged from the Society for insubordination.

It may be, of course, that Francis wrote as frequently to his other assistants and that they failed to keep the letters. This, however, is probably not the case. In any event the stupid Mansilhas must be credited with sufficient sense to have preserved what is of priceless value. These letters are our principal source of information for an important period in Francis's life.

Père Cros calls this series of letters the journal of Francis's apostolic cares.¹³ Probably there was more need to write to Mansilhas than to the other missionaries, for it was one way of forming and directing unsatisfactory human material. Mrs. Yeo makes the charming suggestion: "Perhaps [Francis] alone, with his supernatural insight and charity, saw the gleam of gold in the dull dross, perhaps, with his usual ignoring of self, he did not realise how much of himself he reveals in these short, hasty notes to which he devotes so many of his few spare moments."¹⁴ It is certainly true that, in writing to Ignatius, he makes it clear that poor Mansilhas did not have much brains, nevertheless he always added that his sim-

¹³ *Vie et Lettres*, vol. 1, p. 247.

¹⁴ Pages 139-140. Bellesort regards Mansilhas as a Sancho Panza to Don Quixote, which is unfair to both men (p. 134).

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plicity and goodness of heart made up for this defect. Even so, Mansilhas could not be ordained priest until 1545. And then it was largely because everybody was aware that it was impossible for him ever to learn any more than he already knew, and because priests were so badly needed on the missions.

At this time Francis was still under the illusion that learning and intelligence were superfluous in a missionary. Later, as a result of his experiences among the Japanese, he came to change his mind ; but perhaps for a people like the Paravas it was enough that a man could say Mass and administer the sacraments. Or, if not quite enough, it was the main thing.

We therefore find Francis frequently appealing to Ignatius to send out to India any priests whom he found it difficult to employ to advantage in Europe. It was not necessary that they should be able to preach, or be expert confessors. What was necessary, in a climate like India's, was that they should have sturdy constitutions. Mansilhas fortunately had the constitution of a mule ; not so fortunately he had much of a mule's disposition.

With what patient good-humour Francis deals with him. Apparently replying to a grumbling letter, he writes from Tuticorin on May 14, 1544, trying to pacify him : "I know it is extremely annoying to be perpetually interrupted, and called from one's work to attend to trivialities." (Presumably Mansilhas was struggling with his books, so as to be ready for ordination.) "Never mind, gulp down the importunities, and do your best to keep a quiet mind. After all, you ought to thank God—as

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I suppose you do—that He has placed you in a position where you cannot be idle even if you wished to be. The tastiest of all the sauces of toil, however great that toil may be, is to know that everything that besets you is clearly part of your vocation to the service of God.”

Again he writes to Mansilhas, who seems this time to have been complaining of the drudgery of the work, to remind him that hardship should be considered a great favour shown him by God—to be able while living to atone for the sins of youth, and so suffer a comparatively painless Purgatory while still on earth. “May our Lord give us,” he whimsically concludes his letter of September 7, 1544, “more rest in the other life than we have in this.”

In many of these letters Francis sent special messages for Matthew, a young Tamil boy whom he had put in the care of Mansilhas. How often we read things such as this: “Tell Matthew to be a good boy, and that when I come I shall bring him a little present which I know he will like.”

Another of the messages is that Mansilhas is to tell Matthew that when, on Sundays, he repeats in church the answers to the Catechism, he is to give them out in such stentorian tones that not only the whole congregation may hear, but that Francis will be able to hear them all the way from Tuticorin to Manapar.

This playfulness is caught sight of only now and then; for Francis when writing letters was always in a hurry and had much important business to dispose of. Yet the playfulness is there as, in almost every line, are a warm affection and solicitude for Mansilhas.

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In a letter of this period to Ignatius he speaks of the almost unbearable consolation with which God rewards those who go among the heathen to convert them to the faith of Christ. Often, he says, he feels like crying out, "O Lord, do not give me these consolations, or—since Thou hast given them—take me to Thy glory, because after experiencing them it is a pain for Thy creature to go on living without Thee!"

Here we have a glimpse of the passionate ardour and happiness of Francis Xavier that drove him on, amid the darkness of paganism, determined, despite the loneliness of isolation and the bitterness of opposition, to conquer the world for Christ.

CHAPTER X

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

SOME TIME during August 1544, Francis received from the inhabitants of the island of Manar, off the north-west of Ceylon, a request that he come over to receive them into the Church. In their case there seems to have been no political motive involved : the Manarese acted as they did solely because of what they had heard of the Christian religion and of the sanctity of its preacher.

The application arrived at the time Francis was fully occupied with rescuing his flock of Paravas from the ruthless Badages. But he wrote off to Mansilhas on August 21st, telling him to go to Manar as soon as he found it possible to do so. The Commandant of Negapatam, Francis assured him, had great influence with the Rajah of Jafnapatam, to whose domains Manar belonged, which should make for the protection of the new converts. It was a terrible miscalculation.

Mansilhas, however, was unable to leave for the island just then ; he was too immersed in work. But in October a native priest, whose name has not come down to us, but who was probably one of the interpreters Francis took with him on his first mission to the Fishery Coast,

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and whom tradition says was the first convert made by him at Goa, was sent. He proved so zealous a preacher of the Gospel that in a short space of time he converted the islanders.

What followed was at once a great shock to Francis, and a great consolation. The Rajah of Jafnapatam, whose good will had been too confidently counted upon, alarmed lest the conversions should prove to be the first step to annexation by the Portuguese, gave the Manarese converts their choice between apostasy or death. Newly baptized as the people were, and only summarily instructed, not one, so Tursellinus tells us, hesitated. Mothers about to be slain held up their babies crying, "These are Christians too!" Six hundred suffered martyrdom.¹

With their butcher Francis was fiercely indignant; over the martyrs he was exultant. Often he had been disappointed in the quality of the human material in southern India, and it is likely enough that the Manarese would have betrayed many weaknesses under the stress of trying to live the Christian life day by day. But they had most gloriously shown that they were ready to die for their faith. "God in His goodness," exclaimed Francis, "does not allow us, even in these days, to lack martyrs!" It was the best possible augury for the permanence of his work.

The Rajah of Jafnapatam, of course, would have to be severely punished. Francis determined to see the Gover-

¹ Cf. Brou, vol. 1, p. 295.

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nor at once about the matter, and as he heard, upon arriving at Cochin, that Sousa was far away on the northwest coast at Bassein, he determined to follow him there.

This news came just after the month Francis had spent in Travancore, so there were also questions to be talked over in relation to the friendly understanding its rajah wished to establish with Portugal. The massacre, however, was the burning issue.

On the way to Bassein the catamaran put in for water at Cananore. Two stories about that brief visit have come down to us.

Among those aboard the little vessel was one of the wild soldiers so common among the Portuguese, a man in whom licentious living had not quite extinguished the Christian faith. Francis got into conversation with him, and finally ventured to suggest that he go to confession. The answer was a string of lurid blasphemies.

Instead of holding up his hands in pious horror, Francis continued to talk to him with charming affability, and when they arrived at Cananore the two men went for a walk together on the beach. Upon reaching a clump of palm-trees, Francis knelt down, bared his shoulders, and scourged himself until his flesh was raw and bloody. When he told his companion that it was for him he had performed this penance, the soldier, at last touched by grace, begged Francis to shrive him. From that day he was a changed man.

The other story is of a Portuguese gentleman who complained to Francis of the behaviour of his son.

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What happened came to be regarded as a remarkable instance of prophecy but, more likely than not, was rather an instance of natural shrewdness and insight into character. Francis knew that it is not always a bad sign that a boy should be continually getting himself into mischief, or a good sign that a boy should be a little milk-sop. "Come, come, Señor!" he said, putting his arm round the urchin, "Your son is going to end up as a Franciscan." Is it as astonishing as the hagiographers suppose that the boy actually did?

At Bassein Francis found Martin de Sousa, with whom he had a long talk about the political situation. This was all so confused that it is difficult to make head or tail out of it. But this is what it appears to have been.

All the rajahs of Ceylon were in a state of perpetual war or intrigue with one another. Hardly one of them had obtained his throne except by usurpation or murder, and so their position was precarious.

When, at such a juncture, the son of the Rajah of Cotta was known to be about to become a Christian, his father took this to be an indication of conspiracy and had him put to death. After this "baptism by blood," marvellous things were reported about a cross of light that shone over the martyr's grave.

Such conversions must be regarded with some suspicion, especially when we hear that the prince's brother and cousin fled to Cochin for protection, promising to become Christians with all their people if only the Portuguese would dethrone the tyrant. The job, however, of attempting to conquer Ceylon in favour of a

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rather dubious claimant to the rajahship was a little too much to be taken on just then.²

When we add to this the fact that the Rajah of Kandy had not long before been in negotiation with the Portuguese, offering to become a Christian if the thrones of Kandy and Jafnapatam were guaranteed to his sons, it is easy to understand how it happened that desperate men did their bloody deeds. To complicate matters still further, one of the princes of Cotta who had fled to Cochin was a claimant to Jafnapatam.

Francis had taken no part in this discreditable bargaining. But one thing he saw quite clearly: condign punishment should be meted out to the Rajah of Jafnapatam.

The Governor thoroughly agreed with him, and promised to gather a fleet to send against the murderer of the Christians of Manar. He even put the fate of the Rajah at the disposal of Francis, who charitably writes of him, "I am sure that the prayers of those whom he has martyred will gain him the grace to acknowledge his wickedness, and to do penance for his barbarous crime." He had in him the crusading spirit, but he did not propose to spread the gospel in Ceylon, as has been sometimes suggested, by cannon-shot. A Portuguese fleet should, indeed, sail from Negapatam on a punitive expedition, as soon as it could be assembled, and it was to bring the Rajah to his knees. But the kneeling, as Francis understood the matter, was to be to God rather than to King John.

By January 1545, Francis was back in Cochin, where his friend Michael Vaz, the Vicar-General of Goa, was

² Cf. Coleridge, vol. 1, pp. 247-8.

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awaiting him. There the two friends went over the many intricate problems that were confronting the Christian missionaries in India. And together they drew up a plan of campaign.

It does not appear from the letters written by Francis during this month that he put much confidence in the promises made by the Governor. Nevertheless, being of a sanguine temperament, he was hoping for the best. Only a couple of months before, however, he had written to Mansilhas saying that he was weary of life, and would much prefer to die than see so many outrages against the majesty of God without being able to prevent them. Again comes the old cry, "Rather than this I would go to the land of Prester John, where a man could do work for God without having anybody to thwart him!"

A new plan was drawn up between the Vicar-General and Francis. Michael Vaz should go to Europe to explain in detail to the King just what the conditions were in the Portuguese settlements, asking for the appointment of an official who was to be, in effect, Minister of Missions, with authority, in this department, superior even to that of the Governor. At the same time Francis was to write to John III urging that nobody else be appointed but Michael Vaz himself.

The letter written by Francis to the King on January 20th, is one of the most remarkable that ever came from his pen. It begins with an assumption that John is exalted by principles of the noblest disinterestedness, and

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understands that God's purpose in giving the Indies to his keeping was not so much the enrichment of the royal treasury as an opportunity for heroic Christian service.

Francis knew that this would strike a responsive echo in the heart of the pious John ; he also knew that the King, though a well-meaning man, was not a heroic one. It was necessary, therefore, to frighten him into action.

God, Francis continues, will require from the King an account of the salvation of the many nations who would accept the Faith, were they only given the chance of doing so. With this he works up to his main point. An official should be appointed whose special work in India would be to provide for the salvation of the souls now being lost—and Michael Vaz should be that official.

Several times, and in the most emphatic way, he comes back to this point : "If you wish to provide for the service of God, if you have any regard for the good of those living in India, especially the converts from among the heathen, if you wish to do me a personal service—the only one I have ever asked of you—then you will send Michael Vaz back to us." He admits the Bishop to be a prelate of great virtue, but he is old and ill, and so cannot deal with missionary affairs. But Don Miguel has constantly shown himself courageous in resisting those who persecute Christians.

To head off a likely compromise, he tells John it would not be sufficient merely that a royal letter be sent admonishing the Portuguese officials to further the interests of religion. Somebody must be appointed with the power

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of punishing those who have failed in their duty in this respect. And nobody is fitted for this position except Michael Vaz.

Certainly Francis made himself plain. He did not trouble to accuse any person by name, for the list would have been too long. All the difficulties of the missionaries would be solved by giving authority (which should be entirely independent of that of the Governor) to the right man, who was—Michael Vaz.

In this long letter to the King, Francis never once uses the word "Inquisition." Nor was the establishment of the Inquisition at Goa precisely what he had in mind, though when at the end of 1546 his friend arrived back from Portugal it was as the head of the Holy Office. This, however, meant that Francis had obtained less than the object for which he had striven.³

The evidence for this is clear—sixteen months later he did ask for the Inquisition and, as may be seen from that later letter (dated May 16, 1546) he then had in mind an entirely different object. This was the repression of those many baptized Jews and Moors who went out to the colonies because they would be free from surveillance there. What he had hoped for when writing to the King in January 1544 was a means of restraining dissolute and rapacious officials, such as Cosmo de Piave, from obstructing the work of the missionaries. The In-

³ The history of the Inquisition at Goa is not at all a glorious one. Vaz never had the opportunity to exercise his functions, and when the Holy Office begun officially to operate in 1560 it soon became almost as notorious for its venality as had been the secular administration. A very different tribunal was what Francis would have wished to see.

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quisition was asked for only after all other methods had failed.

Francis's purpose is revealed still more clearly in the letter he wrote a few days later to Simon Rodriguez, superior of the Jesuits in Coimbra. For it is in this letter that Francis lets himself go freely on the subject of the scandal the Portuguese are causing. He is able to write more openly to his old friend than he could to the King. Having explained his motive, he begs Simon to use all his influence with the Court to see that Michael Vaz, and nobody else, gets the appointment. "He is an intrepid man, whom nothing deters from raising his voice against the persecutors and despoilers of the Church." Again there is no mention, even in this very confidential letter, of the Inquisition.

One curious point comes up. Francis begs Simon not to let any of his friends go out to India in the royal service. Evidently he believed that the corruption prevalent in India would be too much for even the best-intentioned men. And it would put him in a very delicate position if he was obliged to denounce any of the proceedings of Simon's friends. The best service that could be done a friend, therefore, was to steer him away from India.

Francis regarded this project of such high importance that he was willing to leave nothing to chance. He was well aware that Vaz, because of his courage in denouncing official venality, had made himself obnoxious to many of the Portuguese in India. He knew, too, that these scoundrels had friends in Lisbon to whom they repre-

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sented Vaz as a meddling busybody.⁴ There was danger of their pulling wires to have him kept in Portugal—promoted if necessary to a bishopric. In that event, the whole scheme failed, because a new man would not understand conditions in India. Furthermore, he would, more likely than not, turn out to be a weak man afraid to act decisively, even if he was not actually hand-in-glove with the administration. And in India, as Francis very well knew, there was nobody who could be trusted to deal with the problems except Michael Vaz.

The plan was as nearly perfect as such things can be. It failed for that very reason. Within a few weeks of his return with the commission of exercising spiritual control, Vaz was poisoned. By then Francis was in the Spice Islands.

There were many things in Francis's letter to John which might have offended a less pious prince. It was hardly politic to say: "I seem to hear voices rising to heaven from India against your Highness, complaining of your niggardly treatment of her, while your treasury is being enriched by immense revenues, from which you give back so small a pittance for spiritual necessities." But Francis knew his man, and got his way.

Francis must have felt that by his letters to the King and to Rodriguez he had begun what would lead to a much better state of affairs. Enthusiastically he speaks of expecting to make during the following year a hundred thousand converts in Ceylon. In view of this he

⁴ Whiteway writes: "Miguel Vaz was a mere vulgar persecutor." (*The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 63.) It is a very unjust judgment.

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demands that everything possible be done to send out new recruits for the mission field.

To the Fathers at Rome, in a letter written during the same week, he gives the same estimate. He explains to Ignatius that priests who, because of their lack of parts, are not of much use in Europe, would be invaluable in India. "But send strong men," he says, "men able to endure the rigours of missionary life. Yet if you haven't young and vigorous men available, send anybody you can spare. Work will be found for them at Goa and Cochin, where there are plenty of Portuguese families, and the comforts needed by those whose health is delicate."

These letters of January 1545 contain nothing less than the Xaverian plan of campaign. He was a general preparing to conquer India for Christ. In a little less than two years he had made at least thirty thousand converts in that country, and had given instruction to the twenty thousand Paravas who before his arrival had been baptized and then deserted. He now confidently expected to turn Ceylon into a Christian country.

Had events turned out as he at that time confidently believed they would — that is with Christian rajahs established at Jafnapatam, Kandy and Cotta — a harvest of a hundred thousand souls in a year was by no means a fantastic estimate. With the prospect of getting Michael Vaz back from Portugal armed with plenipotentiary powers, and determined to make the officials behave themselves, he could see no limits to what might be accomplished.

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Then there was Ethiopia ; and far to the east mysterious China was waiting. As yet they were not part of any definite plan of his, but we may be sure that during this year, which was the turning-point in his life, Francis dreamed of bringing all the Orient to the feet of Christ. It was to be a triumphal procession such as the world had never known, with millions of captives bound in the chains of love. He was only thirty-nine, in the plenitude of his energy. Nothing was impossible.

A bitter disillusionment was to come. Francis saw the ship that had Michael Vaz on board recede into the distance to become a speck on the horizon, and then disappear. At the end of February he took ship himself for Negapatam, where he landed about the middle of March.

There he found the fleet ready to sail on its punitive expedition to Ceylon, but the Commandant at Negapatam refusing to allow it to sail. A Portuguese ship, carrying a valuable cargo, had run ashore near Jafnapatam, and the Rajah, who by now had caught some wind of what was intended against him (possibly from the Commandant himself), sent word to Negapatam that he proposed keeping the ship as a pledge and its officers as hostages.

In view of such a situation it was useless to act. Those who had invested in the stranded merchantman insisted that the expedition be given up. The person of the Rajah had suddenly become sacred.

Francis must have bitterly reproached himself for having failed to act more promptly. The conversations with

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Michael Vaz and the letters he had written from Cochin were matters of far greater importance than the punishment of the Rajah. Yet it would seem that, allowing for all this, it would still have been possible for him to have reached Negapatam a couple of weeks, possibly even a month, earlier than he did. Then there would not have been this unfortunate accident about the miserable ship.⁵

A detail of the plan of campaign had been overlooked. The delay had given the Rajah's friends time to warn him. Even if the fleet had sailed then, his Highness of Jafnapatam would have been able to slip into the interior, where nobody would ever have been able to catch him. One can imagine the sleek oriental smile that flickered across the swarthy features of the Rajah when he heard that the Christians preferred having their ship and cargo back to avenging the blood of the martyrs.

It was characteristic of Francis Xavier that he manfully swallowed this huge disappointment. We find him writing a long letter on April 7th to Mansilhas, now at last a priest. He is to keep going the rounds of the villages, preaching and baptizing, paying special attention to giving the children their lessons in Christian doctrine. Financial matters are fully gone into: Francis wants to know exactly what is due and what is owing. Then Mansilhas is instructed to keep a watchful eye upon the

⁵ A possible explanation, of course, is that Francis did not go to Negapatam sooner because he knew the fleet was not yet there. It may have been that he went from Cochin with the fleet. It is just as likely that the fleet waited until he was ready. Whatever the explanation may be, the time lost was disastrous.

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native clergy, and to see that they set a good example to the people. (Francis was evidently a little uneasy about their morals.) The lay-coadjutor, John de Artiaga, is to be expelled from the Society, if he has not already gone. Cosmo de Piave should be induced to rid his conscience of his many acts of violence and dishonesty, and be obliged to make restitution to the native Christians he has robbed. If he refuses, Francis intends to carry his case to the Cardinal-Infante Henry, the Inquisitor General at Lisbon.

These detailed instructions plainly point to Francis having it in mind to leave India. For the first time the project of going to the Moluccas appears as something likely to be carried out. And yet the matter is not at all definitely settled. For one thing, he has not yet given up hope that something may still be done about Jafnapatam. But most of all he is held back because of his uncertainty as to the will of God. It would seem sufficiently clear that, until Michael Vaz's return, little could be accomplished in India; but it was not at all clear as to where Francis should go in the interval.

He says very little about the agony of indecision which followed the series of shocks he had suffered during the past year, but he gives us a glimpse of it. At one moment he thinks God has spoken to him; at another—so he confesses—he is filled with depression and doubt.

A crisis had been reached, to be met in only one way—that of prayer. He felt that his best course would be to go to Mylapore to pray at the tomb of the Apostle of India. There in quietness he would wait for a sign. "God has sometimes wonderful means of revealing His

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will," he writes to Mansilhas, "—secret touches which penetrate the depths of the soul and flood it with light, so that, struck by these heavenly beams, it can be in no doubt as to what God wishes it to do."

There was no one at hand with whom he could take counsel. Pathetically he had signed his most recent letter to the Society, "The least and loneliest of all your brothers, Francis." He would wait upon God at Mylapore. Since coming to India he had enjoyed hardly one day of rest, and he was badly in need of it for mind and body. All activity should be laid aside while he gave himself entirely to prayer. At the end of April he set out on foot for San Thomé.

It should be noted that this was the second spiritual crisis in the life of Francis, the first being that in Paris eleven years previously. There was no third. From this time forth there was never any indecision or uncertainty.

As to how God spoke to him and made known that he was to go to the Spice Islands, we know nothing. The practical factors, however, are evident enough. Three Fathers—Anthony Criminale, Nicholas Lancilotti, and John Beira—were on their way and were expected to arrive at any time from Mozambique. Surely India could now afford to spare Francis for a while! Jafnapatam was a lost cause, though in the letter Francis wrote from Mylapore on May 8th, it seems that even at that late date Francis was hoping against hope that something could be done. He was reluctant to give up Ceylon, or to leave India. Yet nothing could be accomplished until Michael Vaz returned.

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It was not necessary for Francis to go to Mylapore to think of these things. But it was at Mylapore that he received the divine guidance without which he dared not act. "God," he writes simply to Mansilhas, "has let me know, to my interior delight, what it is He requires of me, and were I to leave it undone I should seem in my own eyes to be fighting against Him. So if I can find no Portuguese ship to take me this year, I shall not be afraid to go by a heathen or Mohammedan vessel sailing for Malacca." From there he intended to go on to the Moluccas.

The explanation of the decision is to be found in the nights of secret prayer. Francis was not more fully resigned than before to the will of God—for after his conversion he was once and for ever fully surrendered. But he did come to see more clearly after a period of very natural hesitation and weighing of possibilities what God's will had in store for him. The invasion of the Badages was now recognized to have been providential, for it had opened Travancore to the Gospel. The closing of the door to Ceylon he could also believe to be providential—for immediately another door had been opened. Had it not been for the running aground of a ship off Jafnapatam, he would now be baptizing thousands there. But human calculation and prudence were folly in the eyes of God. Francis now knew that he was called to the Spice Islands.

The days passed serenely by with Gaspar Coelho, the old Portuguese chaplain at the shrine at San Thomé. There Francis said Mass at dawn at the tomb of the

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Apostle. During the day there would be a little work—for Francis could not be completely idle—among the Portuguese at Mylapore. The evenings were spent in conversation with old Father Gaspar.

We hear again of these conversations when, at the Process of Tuticorin in 1556, Coelho gave his evidence as to his guest's sanctity. Francis had told him of his student life in Paris, and how he had come through the temptations of youth unscathed.

There were other reminiscences that pious Gaspar trotted out at the Process. He told how Francis had a habit of stealing away at night when everybody was asleep to a hut near the church. He was warned not to go, because the place was haunted. All the same, he kept on going, only laughing at the ghost stories.

Then one night there were sounds of what was taken to be a terrific battle with demons, when Francis's voice was heard calling on Our Lady for help. Was this not an instance of that diabolical assault upon the body which is a sign that all the spiritual temptations have failed—a high mark of sanctity? There is another possibility: that when Francis used the discipline upon himself he preferred to go where nobody could see or hear him using it. One with his utter trust in God stood in no superstitious dread of ghosts—or even fear of demons.

Francis had written to Mansilhas that he was ready to go to Malacca in a Moslem or heathen ship if no Portuguese vessel was available. This was not necessary. A young merchant of thirty-five named John d'Eiro had

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asked to be received into the Society, and had offered his own ship. Though Francis was not at all confident that the man was fitted to be a Jesuit, he gave him the Exercises, and prepared to leave in his company.

He soon began to notice, however, though he said nothing about it, that Eiro's sudden zeal had begun as suddenly to slacken. When the day came upon which Eiro had planned to slip away quietly, he sent a boy to say he wanted to see him. Conscious-stricken, feeling sure that he had been detected in a shabby trick—of the kind that most of us are more ashamed than of a great crime—the poor fellow himself tells how he went in to Francis's presence confessing his fault and asking forgiveness.⁶ The pious embellishments are just what one would expect. An observant eye and keen knowledge of the working of the human heart are enough to explain the incident. Now, perhaps because he could not trust himself while possessing his own boat, he sold it and made ready to go with Francis to the Moluccas.

The brisk young trader got his profit after all. He was not retained in the Society, though he had served it well at an important moment. Instead he found a congenial home among the more easy-going Franciscans. It was with John d'Eiro as sole companion that Francis Xavier sailed at the end of August 1545 from Mylapore for the Portuguese settlement of Malacca, as a starting-point for Macassar in the island of Celebes.

⁶ Cf. *Mon Xav.*, vol. II, pp. 402-3.

CHAPTER XI

MALACCA

THE FIRST mention that occurs of Malacca "and the district near it" was in the letter Francis Xavier wrote to King John of Portugal from Cochin on January 20, 1545. But they are mentioned there merely as one of many instances of opportunities for the preaching of the Gospel. At that time Francis's own mind was full of the Jafnapatam project, and he had no intention just then of going elsewhere himself.

But when it grew increasingly clear that the expedition to Jafnapatam would have to be abandoned, Francis began more and more to think of a substitute, and eventually was convinced that God was calling him to the Spice Islands. Malacca was looked upon as no more than a stepping-stone to Macassar in Celebes.

Francis heard of the new sphere of work from Anthony de Paiva, a Portuguese merchant who had arrived at Cochin with four Malay youths whom he was taking to the college at Goa, where they were to be educated for the priesthood. This trader told of having landed at an island off Celebes, where the local chief showed a keen interest in Christianity. He, like his subjects, had

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no religion other than a rudimentary form of sun-worship ; now with the Mohammedans invading the islands, and coming everywhere into conflict with the Portuguese, it seemed necessary for him to side with one party or the other—he was undecided which.

At the next island at which he touched Paiva found much the same conditions prevailing. This time the chief called a council to debate the matter, for he understood the choice would be as difficult as it was important. Just then the chieftain of the first island arrived, with his mind made up, asking for baptism. This was enough to force a decision from his still hesitating neighbour, so Paiva baptized them both, making them at once Christians and vassals of the Portuguese Crown. Paiva was not, however, very well qualified as a missionary, and though administering baptism, was unable to do much in the way of instructing the new converts. But he promised to get priests for them. It was this opportunity, coming when it did, that fired the imagination of Francis Xavier.

It should be again insisted upon that Francis did not leave India in any fit of pique, or merely because he was seized with the itch for foreign travel. To him it was a matter of complete indifference as to whether he had far to go, or merely to cross the street, so long as he could find souls to save. He did, it is true, feel exasperated with the opposition of the Portuguese officials, but he thought he had now hit upon a means of effectually curbing that. He was therefore not throwing up his work in disgust. From his letters of instructions to Mansilhas we can see perfectly clearly that he meant to continue in con-

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trol of the work in Travancore and on the Comorin coast ; but his presence was no longer needed there. His duty as Papal Nuncio was to go through all the districts in the Orient where missionary work was being carried on in order to supervise it and to perfect its organisation.

Francis's special missionary gift, moreover, was that of blazing the trail, starting the work, and of finding suitable men to carry it on. He had done all he could for the time being in India ; he was now eager to open up a new field. At Malacca he would find a Portuguese settlement, indeed, but no community of native converts whom the Portuguese could plunder. And at most of the islands near Macassar there was so far no settlement at all (and at none any of special importance), so there could be little danger of interference. An occasional visit from a Portuguese ship would not be enough to cause serious trouble :—on the contrary, such visits would provide him with the means of keeping in touch, by means of letters, with the activities of the missionaries in India, and with the Society at Rome and Coimbra.

The voyage from Mylapore, allowing for a stop at the Nicobar Islands for water, took a month. This was a time during which Francis could rest ; but as there was never a time when he neglected to seek souls for Christ, he found something to do. He was very adroit in his methods with all kinds and conditions of men. When rough soldiers and sailors shamefacedly put up their dice and cards at his approach, he would smilingly tell them to continue their game, that soldiers were not monks. He would even take a hand in the game himself. On

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one occasion when an inveterate gambler had lost so heavily that he was meditating suicide, Francis borrowed some money for him, and told him to continue—because his luck was about to change, as it did.

So now with the pilot on the ship for Malacca—a man of notoriously evil life—he employed similar methods. It was necessary to win his friendship first; but nobody could for long resist Francis's charm, and soon whenever the pilot was at the wheel, Francis was beside him talking merrily. (This was all the more difficult because, while they were coming through the Straits, many shoals were encountered, and the ship on several occasions came near being wrecked by the characteristic incompetence of Portuguese navigation.) The narrowly escaped dangers provided a good opportunity for bringing up religious notions—and Francis did this deftly, without any touch of parsonical unctuousness. The result was that the pilot, of his own accord, informed Francis that he had to admit that he was a bad man and would like to make his confession as soon as they landed. Anybody less skilful than Francis would have tried to get him to make it then and there, but he knew that it would be better to let the man take his own time. He would have a longer period for reflection upon his sins.

Upon reaching port, the promise was forgotten, and the pilot even tried to avoid his friend, until, meeting him one day walking by the shore, he tried to pass the matter off with a jest, shouting with forced joviality, "Well, Father, I wonder when you will hear my con-

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fession !” There was no church near the beach, so he thought he ran little danger of being caught. Francis however said smilingly, “Why not now, as we walk up and down on the sands ?” Not being able to get out of it, the pilot made the sign of the cross, and mumbled the Confiteor, following it with a perfunctory confession. But as he went on with it, his heart was touched. Francis, seeing this, took him to a chapel, and, because he remembered hearing the man once say that he had a bad knee, he made him sit down on a cushion instead of kneel. At this unexpected kindness the hoary sinner broke down, and wept so much that he was unable to continue. Beating his breast, and crying to God for forgiveness, he asked for a few days in which to prepare himself. He had many acts of restitution to make, many occasions of sin to put away. When the general confession was eventually made, it was also a thorough conversion.

It was at the end of September that the ship anchored in the fine harbour of Malacca, taken by Albuquerque from the Malays in 1511, and at that time the Singapore of the Orient. In the bay were anchored more than a hundred ships—Chinese junks, Malay *proas*, Arab *dhow*s, Portuguese carracks and caravels, together with vessels that had come there from Bengal, Africa and the Spice Islands. The harbour swarmed with little boats, filled with lascars, whose golden-brown bodies, naked except for the loin-cloth, gleamed in the sun. The perfume of oranges mingled with that of sandalwood. Benares brass-ware and silks from China, bales of cotton,

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bundles of sugar-cane, jars of ginger, and barrels of pepper or gunpowder were being loaded or unloaded by sweating coolies, directed by cursing Portuguese traders.

On the quays, as Francis arrived, was gathered the whole population of the town—for somehow the news had preceded him that he was coming, and all were eager to gaze upon a man whose fame already rang through the settlements. There were turbaned Hindus, Arabs clothed from head to foot in white; dainty Sumatran and Javanese girls, bare to the sarong and demurely unconcerned; Chinese women, smooth as old ivory, trousered in satin; perfumed Portuguese ladies and courtesans, rich with all the spoils of the Indies; soldiers, in leather and steel, clanking as they strode; bearded sailors; Franciscan friars; Balian and Siamese merchants; negro slaves—the crowd was agog with curiosity as Francis leaped out of the boat, a tall, spare figure in a black sleeveless *loba*, and with a satchel containing his chalice and vestments, his Breviary and his Missal strapped over his shoulders. Disentangling himself from the surging mob, he went at once to the church of Our Lady of the Mount, which overlooked the town. There he knelt in prayer, thanking God who had brought him safely to his destination.

The people were still waiting for him when he came out. Gnarled sailors knelt for his blessing; women held out their babies for him to touch as he passed. He had come among them with the reputation of a saint. And a saint, as all the world knew, was one who performs miracles. One of the stories told of him afterwards was

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that, as he passed through the crowds, he called all the children by their correct names. The explanation may be a psychological one. Everybody was expecting miracles. So when by a lucky shot or two he hit upon a "Joam" or "Mariazinha," it was immediately taken as a proof of supernatural knowledge.

Though we have few letters written by Francis during this period, in the ones that he did write there is rather more description than he usually gives of the countries he visited. Of India the Fathers in Rome already had a fairly good general idea, so there was no particular point in spending time in an account of its people and customs. It was different with the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. The dense jungles, the huge cliffs upon which the natives took refuge from their enemies, the chain of volcanoes belching fire into the night, the frequent earthquakes—upon all these things Francis touches. He even tells of a truly astonishing sight witnessed with his own eyes in Amboyna—a he-goat giving suck to its young!¹

Yet though we could wish for more information about his doings than we possess—particularly from Francis himself—there is nevertheless enough for us to construct a fairly accurate outline of his life, despite many missing details and a chronology which is perforce at times conjectural.

At Malacca a well-to-do merchant named Diego Pereira would gladly have received Francis into his own house, an invitation which was declined. But a firm friendship

¹ Letter to the Fathers at Rome, dated May 1546.

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sprang up between the two men, and it was Pereira whom Francis got appointed Ambassador to the Emperor of China six years later—to the misfortune of both.

Francis, as usual, preferred a life of poverty, and took up his residence at the hospital where he could nurse the sick and be within call at night. Every Sunday he preached at the pro-cathedral, and every day for an hour or more he taught children their catechism. His confessional was so thronged, he says in his letter of November 10, 1545, to the Society in Portugal, that he was unable to hear all those who wished to go to him. He had on hand, as his chief work, the translation of prayers into Malay, and a detailed exposition of the Creed. "It is a nuisance," he confesses, "not to know the language."² It would seem that, at this stage, he had to get, as before, the matter up parrot-fashion. This systematised daily instruction was what he always regarded as the most valuable of missionary methods, for it was the best means of thoroughly indoctrinating the young. It was intended, as we learn from his letter written to the Society at Rome from Cochin on January 21, 1548, as a year's course. If twenty words a day were memorised by ignorant converts—which was not too much to expect—the whole thing could easily be got by heart in a year.

It became Francis's custom at this time to go through the streets of Malacca ringing a bell at sunset, as a signal to the inhabitants to say a prayer for the souls in Purgatory, and another for those living in mortal sin. The

² Even before leaving India he had begun work upon this Malay catechism, no doubt with the assistance of John d'Eiro.

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practice, he found, increased the piety of the good, and brought salutary terror to the wicked. A crowd of children from his catechism class followed him as he went his rounds, causing a great sensation. The practice proved so beneficial that Francis arranged for its continuation after he had left, and the city authorities appointed a man for the purpose.

Francis's work during these four months was almost entirely among the Portuguese ; but there was plenty of it. One office that he took upon himself—a very difficult one, but for which he was especially fitted by the sweetness and charm of his disposition—was the reconciliation of enemies. The Portuguese, as he had known of old, were a hot-tempered, quarrelsome race, and often knives would be drawn in a dispute about dice or a woman. And as at Goa, so now at Malacca, Francis was instrumental in getting many men to marry or put away their mistresses.

The story of one of these cases has come down to us. Francis, according to his usual method, sought the friendship of a man whom he hoped to turn from sin, a nominally-Christian Chinese trader who kept two slaves as concubines. Invited to dinner, Francis purposely detained his host in animated conversation until a late hour, when he asked whether he might be put up for the night. Upon being shown to his room, he asked to be allowed to see one of the women, who, when she went to him, found him scourging himself with a chain. Holding out another to her, he told her to scourge herself, unless she wished to have him continue to do penance for her sins.

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At this point the trader himself ran in and flung himself in tears before Francis. The result was that one of the women was married by the man, and the other, after suitable provision had been made for her, dismissed.

At Malacca there was a small Jewish community, a common enough thing in the Portuguese settlements. It was large enough to have a Rabbi, who was considered a very learned man. Having a sharp tongue, he employed it to his vast satisfaction in deriding Christians, Francis in particular. The ringing of the bell, and the processions of children calling upon the people in the streets to pray for sinners, struck him as exquisitely ludicrous.

Instead of being annoyed with the scoffer, whom many were willing to pummel into silence, Francis went to visit him, and matching wit with wit, enchanted a lonely scholar who found few people in that distant settlement with whom he could enjoy the pleasures of cultured conversation. Probably his scornfulness was less the sign of a bad disposition than the consequence of unhappy isolation. There was at first no discussion of religious topics ; but as friendship grew more intimate, the Rabbi of his own accord would bring them up, eagerly asking questions about the Christian faith. It was only the second time since leaving Europe that the Professor of the University of Paris had found somebody able to appreciate the subtle dialectic of the schools ; the other was when he encountered the learned Brahmin who wished to become a secret Christian. Yet with Francis it was never a

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question of clever fencing for its own sweet sake : he was after another soul, and the catechetical method so suitable for the ignorant was now of slight avail. The zeal of the Christian priest, and his evident holiness, impressed the Rabbi as much as the arguments employed. The conversations ended in a baptism.

It must nevertheless be confessed that, considering the outlay of effort, comparatively little permanent good was effected at Malacca. A few men and women were, indeed, reclaimed from their sins, and lived ever afterwards devoutly. But in the case of many more, there was merely a temporary improvement. The soft, enervating climate, the ease with which money could be accumulated at Malacca, and the opportunity for indulging every vice, were too much for the great majority. The coming of a famous saint among them had been a delightful experience ; they could talk about it for the rest of their lives — and they did. But they were too voluptuous, too frivolous, to be ready to bear patiently the yoke of Christ. The case of these elegant triflers was, as Francis came to see, much worse than that of the poor heathen, who knew no better. It was to the heathen that he meant to go.

There came about this time from Goa information that John de Castro had arrived in India to replace Sousa as Governor, and with him were the three Jesuit Fathers promised by Ignatius. Of these Nicholas Lancilotti was assigned, by a letter written to the Indian missionaries on December 15, 1545, to teach at the college of Goa under Camerino ; his health was too precarious for work among

the heathen, with its incessant travelling and a subsistence upon poor food and worse water. The Italian, Anthony Criminale (who was destined to be the first Jesuit martyr in India), and the Portuguese, John Beira, were instructed to report themselves to Mansilhas who would put them to work upon the Comorin coast. Paul Camerino, who was acting as Rector of the college, and who had evidently been having trouble with the trustees (for the college had not yet been formally made over to the Society) was urged to act with circumspection in what must have been a very delicate position. He was to do nothing without the consent of the civil authorities. "I assure you," added Francis for his consolation, "that if I were in your place I should do nothing, however small a thing it was, that was contrary to their wishes."

On one point Francis was very insistent: Beira and Criminale must carry out his instructions to the letter. He seems to have had a fear that the Governor, or the Bishop, would attempt to keep them in Goa, therefore he makes his orders so very explicit that they would have no choice but to obey.

From Europe all the news was encouraging. Writing to the Society in Portugal on November 10, 1545, Francis tells them of the letters he has received, and how he has read them again and again, for the joy they give him. They had taken two years to reach him. From Peter Faber he learned of his work at Louvain and Cologne; and Ignatius told him of the flourishing condition of the college at Coimbra. He did not yet know of the effect of his own letters upon some of those who read them in

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Europe :³ of how Jerome Nadal, whom Ignatius had tried in vain to win at the University of Paris, and who had done what Francis Xavier nearly did and taken a good benefice, had been so moved by Francis's words about the need for workers among the poor Christians of the Comorin coast, that he went to Rome, made the Exercises, and entered the Society.

Francis, though he still knew nothing about Nadal's conversion, had his heart filled with thankfulness when he heard that recruits for the mission field had at last arrived. Yet so far from that fact making him satisfied, it only made him clamour for more men. To Rodriguez he writes off in hot haste on December 5, 1545, "I implore you, by the heart of Jesus Christ, to send out as many as possible of the Society !" But he adds a warning : whoever are sent, whether men of learning, preachers, or men merely useful for the drudgery of catechising and the routine work of the missions, should be above everything else men of tested virtue. For the enticements of sin in these lands were very many.

While at Malacca (a great central port for shipping) there had arrived a trader just back from the island of Sancian near Canton (the island where Francis was to die) with a report of having heard about a community of people in China who were evidently not Mohammedans, and who must therefore be either Jews or Christians. There was not much information available about them

³ A collection of them was printed at Paris in 1545 to which Govea (of all people !) had given an *imprimatur*. A copy of this rare book is to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.

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except that they did not eat pork. Francis suspected that they were a Christian body that had reverted to some Hebraic practices. He charged the trader to find out more about these people. If they were Christians, then Francis felt he would have to do something for them.

This fact throws a good deal of light upon Francis's missionary methods ; it was his purpose to save souls, and it mattered nothing to him whether they were the souls of men white or brown or black or yellow. If there had to be any choice, however, he preferred to go to those converts, of whom there were so many, who had already accepted baptism, but who had not yet been able to get much instruction in the Christian faith. This was mainly because it was among such people that he could reap his most abundant harvest. Like all great missionaries, Francis was greedy for souls.

Macassar in Celebes, for whose sake he had left India, now seemed to have needs less pressing than those of the islands further on. For he heard soon after arriving at Malacca that his mission had been anticipated ; a priest named Vincent Viegas and several laymen had already gone there. This being the case, there was little point in his going to a place where he might be considered an intruder. He would break new ground. On New Year's Day, 1546, he sailed with John d'Eiro for Amboyna on a trading ship bound for Banda.

CHAPTER XII

THE SPICE ISLANDS

FOR SIX weeks the trading-ship threaded her way between islands, reefs and shoals, with now and then a space of clear water. Down the Straits from Malacca she went, towards the tip of the Malay Peninsula, with the low feathery shores of Sumatra to the right, then between Java and the southern coast of Borneo, past Celebes (where was Macassar, originally intended by Francis to be his field of labour), along the line of the archipelago, which ended in a chain of volcanic islands belching fire and smoke into the sky, until at last the pilot steered northwards for Amboyna.

The combination of seductive loveliness—the islands with their white beaches overhung by coconut palms—with the treacherous shoals and the volcanoes lurid at night, seemed to Francis a visible image of sin. As he himself tells us, he used to point to the fiery craters and impress upon his converts that these were the mouths of hell, and that into hell went those who worshipped idols in despite of the one true God. And the beautiful krisses of these people—with their curved, gilded and poisoned blades—well symbolised, as M. Bellesort has said, the

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fantastic, violent and treacherous soul of the Malay.¹

There were many dangers during the voyage. The seas were still uncharted, and Portuguese seamanship was unskilful. Occasions came when those on board could feel the bottom of the four-hundred-ton² ship scraping the sand, and trembled lest at the next moment the timbers would be shattered upon rocks. Then, too, Achin in north Sumatra was a pestiferous nest of pirates, whose *proas* were likely at any moment to be encountered. But as Francis wrote to the Society at Rome during May 1546, these very dangers were to him a source of ineffable consolation. Death itself could not make afraid one who trusted himself so completely to God. Very different were the feelings of many on board, and rough men wept thinking themselves lost.

On February 14th, the ship took in sail and lowered a boat ; in this Francis, Eiro, and a Portuguese trader were rowed ashore. Down through the crystal-clear waters of the bay enclosed between two peninsulas they could see thirty or forty feet below the coral branching upwards, and some of the strange, terrible and beautiful creatures of the Southern Ocean gliding, squirming, or crawling between. Alfred Russel Wallace has described the harbour of Amboyna, and said that there is probably no spot in all the world richer in marine wonders. The floor of the bay is very uneven, with rocks and chasms and little hills and valleys full of animal forests. Orange or rose-red

¹ Page 164.

² Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, p. 415.

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medusae, fragile and transparent, float along the surface.⁸ It is very characteristic of Francis that he has not a word about this in his letters.

At Amboyna there was a small Portuguese settlement with a palisade ; but the traders and officials did not consider it any part of their business to instruct the native converts made, in somewhat perfunctory fashion, eight years previously. Not even to the children had baptism been administered, consequently Francis found a great deal of work on his hands when he visited in turn each of the six nominally-Christian villages—mere collections of huts of bamboo and palm. He quickly ran up a church—which was probably no more than a flimsy roof stretched above poles—where he said Mass, heard confessions, baptized the babies who had been born since a priest was last there, and taught the Catechism to old and young alike.

Francis now came for the first time at grips with Islam. Previously, he had preached only to heathens or uninstructed Christians. But in these islands Arab and Malay followers of the Prophet were penetrating everywhere, and their religion had begun to spread like wildfire. The rudimentary paganism of the natives had little force to repel it, for there were no religious ideas among them except those of a crude animism.

Francis saw, however, in the trade rivalries of the Moslems and the more newly-arrived Portuguese a strategic advantage for the Christian faith. The Moslem

⁸ Cf. *The Malay Archipelago*, p. 226.

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proselytising effort was, here as elsewhere, carried out with the sword, and the pagans were obliged to accept the aggressive religion or to be borne away as slaves. An opportunity arose, therefore, for the Portuguese to figure in the rôle of protectors to the oppressed people who, out of gratitude, and the more firmly to cement the alliance, could, he thought, be easily persuaded to become Christians. Writing to the Fathers at Rome in May 1546 he pleads for helpers to be sent out. They need not—he reiterates the old argument—be men of learning or specially gifted, so long as they come for the sake of Christ. “If only a dozen of them,” he cried, “would come every year, there would soon be an end of this sect of Mohammed, and everybody in the islands would soon become Christians !”

He mentions also some of the other islands he intends to visit, inhabited by a race even more savage than those of Amboyna—among them Ceram and Nussaloet. He was told that the people in the one were headhunters, in the other cannibals. They not only eat the bodies of the enemies they have killed in battle, he writes, but when any among them dies a natural death, they cut off the hands and feet, which they consider great delicacies. “It is actually reported,” Francis goes on, “that when a man is planning to give a banquet, he will ask his neighbour for the ‘loan’ of his father, promising to do as much for him at some future date.” Quite undeterred by the dangers, and against the advice of Portuguese at Amboyna, Francis determined to go to these fierce savages.

From all this it may be seen that there was a good deal

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of difference among the various races of the archipelago. Some were of the refined and intelligent Malay type, others were of a brutalised Papuan strain. Yet all were equally the children of God, all equally moved the charity of Francis.

He now had to go up craggy mountain sides, clothed with almost impassable jungles, where enormous vines wreathed the trees, and ferns nearly as large as trees shot upwards from the dank soil. Crocodiles were in the swamps and rivers, and pythons curled around the boughs overhead. "The unspeakable depths, the sombre shadows, where suffocating vegetation is struggling to find a place in the sunshine, where trees in their upward strife tread each other underfoot, where ground plants have taken permanently to arboreal life, where certain plants germinate in the earth and then ascend steadily to the tree-tops, where even palms and bamboos have taken to climbing that they may thrust their leaves above the forest's dome—in all this, how much there is of romance, and of tragedy." It is thus that Major Enriquez describes this world.⁴

Butterflies unseen before, blue and black, purple, vermillion, or gleaming with green diamonds and transparent azure, fluttered over hibiscus flowers. Red-crested cockatoos shrilled and chattered at the invasion of their solitudes, and birds of paradise streaked the shadows with unbelievable glory.

But insects, in clouds above the head of Francis, stung him as he toiled through the jungle. When he waded

⁴ Page 36.

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through the swamps, small leeches — some of them beautifully marked with bright yellow stripes — attached themselves to his legs. There was no escaping them, for they had acquired the habit of stretching themselves out on a leaf at the sound of a footstep, and of then clinging to anything that brushed against them. Ants — red, white, and black — tormented him night and day, and green flies drank the sweat that poured down his face as he crawled up the mountains, forcing his way with so much difficulty through the dense undergrowth. His letters, however, say nothing about his difficulties.

When he came to a clearing and a collection of huts, he thought at first that everything was deserted. His shouts brought forth no response. All was silence except for the strident chattering of the cockatoos, until he began to sing in Malay. This was the common language of the islands, though there were innumerable local dialects.

At Francis's voice singing there would be a stirring of life. It was stealthy at first, and quite soundless. Then a wizened crone would furtively peer from the entrance to a hut ; naked children would venture out from the bamboo thickets, followed by men with spears or blow-pipes for their poisoned darts. All the women, except those who were very young, had empty dugs hanging ghastly to their stomachs. It was to such people as these that Francis, having won their confidence at last, preached Christ.

Everything had to be made very simple and concrete if they were to take it in. It was then that he explained that

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hell—hotter than the lava rolling down the mountains—would be the portion of sinners. For their benefit he had prepared a rhyming catechism, because there was nobody among them educated enough to act, as among the Paravas, in the capacity of catechist. But they could be taught to sing-song a few elementary Christian truths.

It was not the way of Francis to baptize people and then desert them. He planned, as early as May 1546, the establishment of a central missionary station in the islands, from which permanent evangelisation could be conducted. Writing from Amboyna he asked Francis Mansilhas and John Beira to join him as soon as possible. To ensure their coming he made it a positive order, which could not be disregarded. It was like him to frame it in these terms: "So as to give you an opportunity to acquire merit through obedience, you must understand that I formally command it." With this came a suggestion that they should try to secure recruits for the missions—laymen as well as priests—in India.⁵ Time pressed, and the missions could not afford to wait for the men sent out from Europe, though these were admittedly of higher quality than any likely to be secured in the settlements. Francis had gone out to the Moluccas with just such an assistant in John d'Eiro. He was about to pick up a far more satisfactory adjutant.

There arrived at Amboyna just then eight Spanish ships. These had set out from Mexico to establish a colony in the Philippines. The attempt was not successful, and in 1545 Fernando de Sousa y Tavora was sent against them, be-

⁵ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, p. 420.

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cause the Philippines were claimed by Portugal. The Spaniards were glad enough to submit without fighting, whereupon they were provided with all necessities and told they might go on to India and enter the Portuguese service, or return, if they preferred, to Spain.

Their stay of three months at Amboyna gave Francis much to do in the way of hearing confessions, preaching, patching up quarrels, and caring for the sick. Why he should have been called upon to attend to the spiritualities is not apparent, for the fleet carried eight chaplains — four Augustinians and four secular priests. But probably these performed their duties as a mere matter of routine : certainly Francis writes as though the moral and spiritual condition of the Spaniards left much to be desired. Even to help them to a good death he found hard in the case of men who had lived so long in the habit of sin that they had lost all desire for reformation.

Among the chaplains was a Valentian named Cosmo Torres. Francis says nothing about him in his letters, and possibly put him down in his own mind along with the others as an ecclesiastical functionary. But without knowing it, he had made a profound impression upon Torres at their first meeting. The chaplain, though he felt a strong impulse to join Francis at once, sailed away without saying anything about his secret feelings. He must have been very shy. At Goa, however, he made the Spiritual Exercises, joined the Society, and in 1548 went with Francis to Japan.

In June 1546 Francis left for Ternate. At the end of October he sailed to a still more savage place, called by

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him the Island of the Moors, and which is to be identified as Morotai. He was now completely out of touch with civilization, but his spiritual consolations seemed to increase with loneliness. It is a touching instance of his affectionate disposition that—as he tells his fellow-Jesuits in Europe—he cut out their signatures from their letters to wear them always over his heart, along with the copy of his vows of profession. Warmed by the thought of that human love, but still more by the sense of the presence of God which never left him, he went through the jungles and swamps at the ends of the earth.

The Portuguese warned him not to go there, for the inhabitants of the island were of the fiercest kind. Their favourite amusement, according to all the accounts, was that of poisoning strangers. Yet some of them had once been baptized as Christians. If it was true that they had murdered their priest and had reverted to their original paganism, they all the more needed to be sought out and brought back to the fold. He would swim there, he said, if there was no other way of going. Reluctantly they had to provide him with a Malay *proa*.

Since he was not to be turned from his purpose, his friends at Ternate tried to load him up with antidotes against poison. Even these he refused, for to take them would imply a lack of trust in God. "Besides," as he finely says in his letter to the Society at Rome, "I did not want to add to my other burdens the burden of fear."

In two letters written at this time he refers to a saying of Our Lord's—one closely akin to that which had brought Francis to the decision to renounce all for His

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sake : "It is easy enough to understand the grammatical sense of the words, 'He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake shall find it' ; but it is a very different matter when the hour arrives to put this into practice." He quite expected when he left that he would never return.

No attempt was made to murder Francis, at least none that he mentions. But it is evident from one little thing that slips out that the people were dangerous to be among. The missionaries who were destined for work on the Island of the Moors were instructed to bring only chalices of tin, so as to give no incentive to theft and murder. Francis's summary of his own experiences, given in his letter of January 21, 1548, from Cochin, is this : "Nowhere do I recall having been suffused with so much spiritual consolation as there, and this enabled me to bear lightly all danger and fatigue and bodily discomfort when surrounded by enemies and quite helpless among them. It seems to me that the place should be called not the Island of the Moors but the Island of Trust in God."

About Ternate, to which place he returned in January 1547, we know a good deal more than about the Island of the Moors. Here was a small Portuguese settlement and an orderly native government under the general control of the King's officers. Here, too, was a loveliness that must have been soothing to Francis after his stay among savages. A modern traveller has described it in the enchanting prose at his command: "The sea, that deceptive sea of rip-tides and reefs, was as radiant and benign as though it had confessed its sins, and peace was in its

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ancient heart and shanks. Ternate was of olivine, and about its head were clouds which, after various dyes, became bright gold after sunset, and reflected about as briefly the aura of a day we had lost. Lights appeared in the deeps of the shadow of earth, and stars in the sky.”⁶

But beautiful as was its setting, its moral condition was such that the proverbial expression in the East estimated that to the same degree as Malacca was worse than Goa, so was Ternate worse than Malacca.

Nevertheless Francis effected through his preaching a great, if only temporary, improvement. Again he established the catechism classes. Again the bell was rung at sunset calling all those who heard it to pray for the dead and for those dead in sin. Francis describes in his letter of January 21st how his confessional was thronged, and how the boys and girls in the streets, the women at work in their houses, the farmers in the fields, the coolies at the docks, and the fishermen at sea, now sang instead of their former disedifying ditties the rhymed exposition of the Creed in Malay. Even the pagans sang the new songs.⁷ The Devil was not allowed to have all the good tunes.

Since some of his Protestant critics have often said that Francis taught his converts little except a few prayers, attention might be drawn at this place to an important document written by him specifically for the use of his Moluccan converts after he had left them, and while they were waiting for the new priests. It is a detailed exposition of the essential Christian doctrines and moral re-

⁶ H. M. Tomlinson, *Tidemarks*, p. 187.

⁷ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, pp. 425-6.

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quirements. Nobody who has ever read it could possibly repeat in good faith the familiar charge. It covers fifteen closely printed pages (831-844) in the first volume of the *Monumenta Xaveriana*. Père Brou terms it a sort of "catechism of perseverance."⁸

One difficulty stood in the way of the spread of Christianity: the former Sultana of Ternate, Neachila Pocaragua, who had become a Christian, receiving in baptism the name of Isabelle, had been deposed, and the new Governor at Goa had placed upon the throne one of her very accomplished and very corrupt young relatives.⁹

The new Sultan spoke Portuguese fluently, and was in the habit of parading his friendship for King John—as well he might, since to the Portuguese administration he was indebted for his position.

He was so polished as to be positively slippery, and he tried to take Francis in with suave explanations that there was no real difference between Islam and Christianity, because both religions worshipped the same God. When Francis pressed his elegant Highness in that event to accept baptism, he discovered the real motive of opposition: the Sultan was not inclined to disband what was for a petty chieftain an immense harem. Not content

⁸ Vol. I, p. 411.

⁹ The conversion of Isabelle is generally credited to Francis. And Father Coleridge translates a phrase which appears in the letter written to the Fathers at Goa on June 20, 1549, as "This lady became a Christian by my ministry" (vol. II, p. 157). I find no such explicit statement in the original version. (*Mon. Xav.*, vol. I, p. 522). My suspicion is that Francis had little to do with it and that Isabella's baptism was only one more of the political deals—part of a bargain made with the recalled Commandant Freitas.

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with the orthodox four wives permitted by the Koran, he had provided himself with a hundred, and as many concubines—a luxury he could not forego. Islam was in the eyes of a sensualist a far more agreeable religion than Christianity.

Francis, though he saw through him, did not abandon the hope of eventually converting him. Much depended on such a conversion. The intellectual hold of Mohammedanism was not yet very firm in the islands. Their inhabitants accepted the faith of the Prophet merely because it interfered so little with the sexuality in which they were so adept. But they knew little about its positive teaching, and were as yet devoid of the fanaticism of Islam.

The establishment of a permanent mission there was projected by Francis; and Beira, who was later put in charge of this work, before he died built up a Christian community of twenty thousand souls. If further proof is needed that Francis carefully planned to follow up every enterprise he initiated, we have it in the fact that when he left the islands he took with him twenty young Molucans with the intention of having them educated at Goa for the priesthood. His belief at this time, and perhaps even to the end of his life, was that the spread of the Gospel among the heathen ultimately depended upon the creation of an indigenous priesthood—a belief which, though no doubt essentially sound, was somewhat premature.

All this had been accomplished in a little more than a year, during which time Francis had worked single-

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handed, for he had left John d'Eiro behind at Amboyna. The foundations had been laid, and laid well. It was for others to build upon them. Now that Francis knew what the conditions were, he would be able to direct the work of his successors. A great harvest of souls had been already won; a still greater harvest was ready for the sickle.

CHAPTER XIII

A MOMENTOUS MEETING

SOON after Easter, which in 1547 fell on April 10th, Francis Xavier set out on the first lap of his return journey to India. It was necessary for him to visit the missions of the Pearl Fisheries and of Travancore, to see for himself how matters were progressing at the college at Goa, and perhaps to take up again the abandoned project of Ceylon. In all these enterprises he was counting upon the active support of Michael Vaz.

He did not yet know it, but Michael Vaz was dead : the work in the Portuguese settlements would have to be carried on, as before, with the Portuguese officials as its main hindrance. There was, however, something else of the highest importance Francis did not yet know : he was about to meet in Malacca the man who was to inspire him with the idea of carrying the Gospel to Japan. The greatest of all his undertakings was about to begin.

There was a brief visit to Amboyna, where Eiro had been left in charge of the converts. For the last time Francis went the rounds of the villages to make sure the catechising of the children was being properly attended to, and to leave for their elders his recently prepared exposi-

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tion of Christian doctrine. Other priests were soon to take his place. Eiro had not shown the special gifts needed in a missionary and so was withdrawn. By July they arrived at Malacca.

Here Francis found Beira, whom he had summoned for work in the Moluccas, waiting for him. With him was Nuñez Ribeiro, a priest, and Nicholas Nuñez, a lay-brother. But Francis Mansilhas, who should also have been there, had flatly disobeyed most explicit orders. It was an unpardonable offence, and was to result in his expulsion from the Society.

There was great pleasure in making the acquaintance of the three missionaries, whom Francis found to be true men of God, admirably fitted for the work to which he had assigned them. Some time during August he gave them his blessing and sent them on their way to the Spice Islands.

But though they were able to leave — for they were to sail eastwards — Francis knew that he would be obliged to remain until November at Malacca on account of the monsoon which at that season was blowing to the east across the Bay of Bengal. He therefore settled down to work in the port.

Again was seen in the streets the familiar figure in the tattered *loba*, with a crowd of children always about it ; again the confessionals were crowded ; again there was a somewhat frothy religious revival. Francis spent himself to the last ounce to bring the people to the practice of Christian virtue ; but they seemed beyond redemption. Little could be accomplished of permanent value among

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those whose moral fibre was so rotted with the sins of sensuality. There were glib promises of reformation, and then lapses into the learned vices for which the place was notorious.

How unstable the people were is shown by the fact that though they treated Francis at this time as though he were already a canonized saint, five years later he was hooted in the same city. Even so, he fared better than his Lord ; there were only five days between the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Crucifixion.

While he was at Malacca, letters reached Francis from Europe telling him of the success of Laynez and Salmeron at the Council of Trent, of the conversion of Nadal, whom he had known at the University of Paris, and of how Francis Borgia, the Duke of Gandia, was setting his affairs in order with the intention of joining the Society. Among all these sources of joy was one sharp pang : Peter Faber was dead.

If it had taken no weaker hand than that of Ignatius to draw Francis away from his early ambitions, with no man had he ever been so intimate as with Peter ; there was none whom he had loved more. Now his friend was gone. Yet if he had gone from earth, it was to heaven. At once, anticipating the formal seal of canonization, Francis began to invoke him as a saint. Perhaps Peter had never been so close to him as now.

It is assumed here, as it is in Father Coleridge's life of Francis, that letters containing these items of news reached him while he was at Malacca.¹ The reason for this is

¹ Cf. vol. I, p. 406.

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that in Francis's letter of January 21, 1548, written at Cochin to the Fathers at Rome, he mentions praying to Peter during a storm at sea on the voyage from Malacca to India. This fact receives, however, a very different interpretation by Père Cros,² who is followed in the matter by Mrs. Yeo.³ They suppose a case of second-sight, on the ground that there would not have been time for a letter, written after Peter Faber's death—which occurred on August 1, 1546—to have reached Malacca by December 1547.

This would seem to be a rather large assumption. It is perfectly true that ordinarily a letter from Rome took eighteen months to reach Malacca—six or seven months to Goa, and then a wait until the spring for the monsoon to lift. Nevertheless boats did sometimes leave India for points further east at other times than the spring. Francis, it will be recalled, had himself sailed from India for Malacca at the end of August. It was therefore not at all impossible for a letter to have arrived within a year. This being the case, I prefer to suppose that letters did reach him from Rome rather than to suggest the less likely possibility of second-sight.

Among the many miracles told by the witnesses at the Processes proceeding canonization are several concerning Francis's power of foretelling the future. We now have another seemingly well-authenticated account of his knowledge of events that were happening at a distance—which, of course, is not prophecy but second-sight. It

² Cf. vol. 1, p. 438.

³ Cf. p. 199.

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might also be added that this, though an unusual gift, is a perfectly natural one, like that possessed by people who see music in the form of coloured geometric diagrams. It has no connexion whatever with sanctity ; that a saint possessed it is only a coincidence.

At all events, on October 18th, just when Francis was preparing to embark for India, the cry went up in Malacca that the terrible Achinese pirates from Sumatra were making an attack.

Into the harbour they sailed, we are told, with sixty *proas* containing six thousand men—probably a gross exaggeration of the numbers. Some of the Portuguese ships were burnt, and though the assault on the castle was beaten off, fear had been struck into every heart. Apparently all that the pirates got out of the raid, however, was—of all things in the world !—a few geese.

Upon recovering from their fright, the settlers thought the incident of the geese exquisitely funny. Even when some unfortunate fishermen, caught by the Achinese in the open sea, were sent back with their ears and noses cut off and with a challenge to come out and fight written in their blood, the Commandant, Simon de Mello, still tried to pass the whole matter off as a joke. That was so much safer than accepting the challenge.

This, however, struck Francis as intolerable. He insisted that they set out in pursuit of the pirates. Only a few unseaworthy vessels were available, and only a hundred and eighty men could be mustered. But they were stung into action.

At this point the enterprise came close to collapsing

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because of seeming to be too ludicrous : the leaky flagship sank as it was crossing the harbour bar. Undismayed, Francis told the Portuguese that two more ships were on their way, and would arrive before nightfall.

When the prophesied ships arrived, however, it was seen that they were preparing to pass Malacca so as to avoid paying the harbour dues. Francis had to go out to them in an open boat, and give an understanding that the dues would be remitted if only the ships would join the fleet which was preparing to sail after the Achinese. To his astonishment he found that one of these ships was under the command of the same man, Diego the Gallician, half-merchant and half-pirate, whom he had met at Mozambique six years previously. Then he had caused trouble by bearing tales about Stephen da Gama to Sousa ; this time he did good service.

But six weeks dragged slowly by, and no news came. Women, frantic with grief, began to consult soothsayers, who told them that the Portuguese had been wiped out. So wives put on widows' weeds, and when Francis urged them to pray for victory, they only shrugged their shoulders and answered bitterly that it would be better to pray for the repose of the souls of the dead.

On the second Sunday in Advent (December 4th) Francis was preaching at High Mass when suddenly he broke off to cry, "Jesus, God of my Soul, I beseech Thee by Thy agony not to desert those whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood !" Tears were streaming down his face, and for a few moments he laid his head upon the pulpit-rail in silent prayer.

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The congregation looked at him in consternation. Had he, the one strong soul in Malacca who still hoped, given way to despair? Then he lifted his head, and they saw his face was shining. "Malaccans," he called out in a glad, resonant voice, "good news! Our fleet has defeated the enemy with the loss of only three men. In a few days they will be home again. Let us say a Pater-noster and Ave in thanksgiving."⁴

It turned out later that on that very day the Portuguese fleet, drawn up under a promontory near Kedah at the mouth of the river, surprised the Achinese as they came out. The guns, aimed all together from still water, demoralised the pirates whose ships drew together instead of opening out. Unable for this reason to use their artillery to any advantage, they began ramming one another as the cannon-balls of the Portuguese crashed through their hulls and raked their decks. The panic that so easily spreads in undisciplined bodies, and which has accounted for a hundred signal victories won by European armies on land and sea over forces greatly outnumbering them, took away all power of effectual resistance. The Portuguese now grappled with the disabled ships, taking them with pike and cutlass. Half the Achinese losses occurred because, despairing of victory or flight, the pirates leaped overboard and were drowned. Closer their *proas* were pressed together until they were helpless before the Portuguese anger. Ten ships were sunk; ten others disabled; twenty-five captured.

This is how the story is told by Tursellinus and Lucena.

⁴ Mendez Pinto, p. 1070.

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But they had somewhat uncritically based themselves upon Mendez Pinto.⁵ Diogo do Couto puts the number of the sunk *proas* as five, which seems more credible. Francis makes no mention of the incident. But there is no doubt (when all due allowance has been made for exaggerations) that a victory was won over the Achinese.

Something much more important in the life of Francis Xavier now has to be recorded. And this is fully and soberly told in his own letters.

Early one morning in December there came into the church of Our Lady of the Mount, just as Francis had concluded a marriage ceremony, a young Japanese named Anjiro in company with a sea-captain named George Alvarez.⁶ André Bellesort pictures the scene: the groom pleased with himself, his bride positively radiant in her newly-acquired virtue, and a little swarthy man waiting with a bearded, sea-faring friend for an interview with the famous missionary.⁷

It turned out that Anjiro had come to Malacca in search of Francis some time before, only to find that he had just left for his journey to the Moluccas. He had a strange story to tell.

In Japan he had committed a murder, and consequently had been obliged to take refuge on the Portuguese ship commanded by Alvarez. From him he had heard such wonderful things about Francis that he determined to

⁵ Cf. pp. 1066-1071. Cf. Père Brou's comment in his bibliography (vol. I, p. ix).

⁶ The young man is variously styled "Angero" and "Anger." His name should really be written "Yajiro." (Cf. Cros, vol. I, p. 47, footnote.)

⁷ Cf. p. 191.

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seek him out and to ask for baptism. Upon missing Francis, he asked the Vicar-General at Malacca to make him a Christian, which the Vicar refused to do because he had a heathen wife in Japan. This shows him to have been unaccountably ignorant of Canon Law ; yet his ignorance proved providential, because it brought Anjiro back again to Malacca in search of Francis.

Perhaps Anjiro's former failure to meet the missionary was providential for another reason. Had Francis met him at the time when he was fully occupied with the project of the Moluccas, his curious stories about Japan might not have had much effect. They would of course have been considered an interesting piece of information (like the information Francis had previously received about China), but nothing that demanded immediate action. December 1547, however, was quite different from January 1546. Francis was by now eager to break fresh ground. At once an inner voice told him that this was a call from God.

He would have been perfectly willing to baptize Anjiro at once, but to have done so might have appeared a slur to the Vicar-General at Malacca. There was the further consideration that it was desirable to get the young Japanese, and the two fellow-countrymen who accompanied him, to Goa, where they could learn Portuguese. The advantage of having such very intelligent men as interpreters was immediately apparent.

Francis soon came to the conclusion from what he saw of Anjiro and his companions that the Japanese must be of all nations the one most eager to enquire into truth. He

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noticed that they carefully wrote down his answers to the questions with which they bombarded him. He noticed, too, that Anjiro often went to the church of his own accord to pray. "This is a man," he wrote, "who is really anxious to learn, and therefore he will greatly profit from instruction and soon come to an acceptance of the truth." Francis had found a treasure.

Unfortunately Anjiro could not go on the same ship with him, as he was under obligations to the Portuguese, Alvarez, and had promised to travel to Goa in his company. But this involved no more than a temporary separation. In the week that they were together Francis eagerly gathered all the details he could about Japan and its people.

It was wonderful news that he was able to send the Society at Rome when he wrote from Cochin on January 21, 1548. Here at last was a highly civilized people without anything of the laziness of the Indians, or the savagery of the Moluccans. And among them there were no corrupting European contacts.

If the young Japanese merchant asked intelligent questions, he also gave intelligent answers. In every way he was admirable. "When I asked him," Francis writes, "whether he thought in the event of my going with him to Japan that its inhabitants would become Christians, he said, 'My countrymen will not instantly assent to everything they hear, but they can be counted upon to ask a number of questions about the religion you are teaching. Above all they will observe whether your practice coincides with your professions. If, after careful examination

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of the matter, they are satisfied, I am sure they will all become Christians—for we are a nation that follows the guidance of reason.’” What better material could Francis wish for than this ?

Alvarez and one or two other Portuguese traders who had touched at Japanese ports confirmed the accuracy of Anjiro’s reports. They had not gone inland, but they had seen enough to have formed a high estimate of the Japanese character. As a nation they valued honour above everything else ; they were sober, keen-witted, polite and industrious. There was no doubt in their minds that Francis would spend his time much more profitably in Japan than in India.

Then comes a very significant sentence : “I seem to foresee that within two years either I or some other member of our Society will have to go there.” It was a country far off, and the voyage would be dangerous because of the stormy seas and the Chinese pirates with which they were infested. But difficulties and dangers were nothing to Francis. He saw that a heaven-sent opportunity had come to him, one that he was the last man in all the world to neglect.

CHAPTER XIV

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FULL though Francis was of enthusiasm for the Japanese project, which from the moment of meeting with Anjiro had begun to take shape in his mind, he was not to be rushed. He had been absent from India for over two years, and his presence there was now urgently needed. It was never his way to embark upon any undertaking without careful consideration, nor above all without prayer. As events turned out, his intuition that he would be called to Japan proved correct, but he was not free to go there until eighteen months later.

On January 13, 1548, Francis landed at Cochin on the Travancore coast, and there he found the aged Bishop of Goa. We are able to infer what it was the two old friends discussed at this time from the batch of letters Francis wrote a week later post-haste to catch a ship about to sail for Europe.

Conditions in India had not at all improved since he had left for the Moluccas. Indeed in some respects they had grown worse. The Rajah of Travancore, probably because he found less profit than he expected from the Portuguese alliance, had begun to persecute his Christian

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subjects and had forbidden any further conversions. The Portuguese officials were as corrupt and rapacious as ever. The practice of heathen worship was connived at, even in Goa. The new Governor, John de Castro, though an exceptionally efficient and honest administrator, was more concerned with political and military matters than with the spread of religion. And now—probably for the first time—Francis heard that Michael Vaz, from whom he had hoped so much, had been poisoned within a month of his return from Portugal as Inquisitor.

We shall almost certainly never know who was guilty of this crime. Some said the Brahmins were the murderers; others that these were to be found among the Jewish community, which had already begun to fear the harrow of the Holy Office. Even the Bishop was accused.

There can be no doubt that many people in India, even among those who cannot be suspected of the murder, were not altogether displeased when Vaz died. Père Cros quotes in a footnote a letter written by the Dean of the cathedral chapter to the Governor in which there is an undisguised sneer at Diogo de Borba's grief being so little tempered with Christian resignation over the event as to bring about his own death.¹ But at least the Bishop was innocent. Francis, aware that John III would have heard the rumours, wrote to the King on January 20, 1548, saying that, though he was unable to say how he had come to

¹ Vol. I, p. 343. Whiteway (p. 63), says this letter was written by Pedro Fernandes, the chief magistrate of the city. It is certain that many important people in Goa, even those who may not have had anything to do with the crime, did not take the trouble to pretend to be sorry about it.

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know, he could testify to his definite knowledge : the Bishop had nothing whatever to do with the crime. The information presumably had been obtained under the seal of the confessional. Absolute certainty would not have been gained had Francis heard (as he probably did hear) the Bishop's confession. We must suppose that he had had the story *sub sigillo* from the man actually guilty. The inference is clear : the murderer was one of those Portuguese officials to curb whom Vaz had been appointed. In the language of the American underworld, the racketeers had bumped off the man appointed to clean them up.

It was under the spur of this catastrophe that Francis wrote as he did to the King. Yet blunt though many of his expressions were, there was a reluctant, even a tender tone to the letter. For by informing the King of what is going on in India, Francis points out that he has taken away from him the possibility of pleading ignorance at the judgment bar of God. Nevertheless to keep silence about such matters would be to sin. Again and again he rubs this point in — brandishing the fear of hell over John : “Perhaps your Highness will receive a more inexorable judgment at the tribunal of God from the very fact that I give you this warning.” But he adds with exquisite (though double-edged) courtesy that it is because of his personal regard for a man who has shown himself a true friend of the Society that he has felt obliged to work so hard to discharge a part of the royal obligation towards God in the matter of the conversion of the heathen.

Francis's settled conviction was that John held his East-

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ern possessions only as a stewardship. The division of the New World between the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, made by Alexander VI, was primarily for the sake of the Gospel, and any temporal profit (though permissible, if in due measure) could be regarded as no more than secondary. All the trouble that had arisen was due to gold having been considered more important than God. Though Francis does not say just this in so many words, he implies it in every word. The King is personally responsible for the furtherance of the Christian faith in his dominions.

In Francis's letter to Rodriguez, written on the same day, he comes plump out with it : this is the condition upon which the King of Portugal has been entrusted with India. Yet prompt as he is to punish those who wrong him in mundane matters, he fails to punish those who are negligent where religious obligations are at stake. If only Francis was sure that the King would not misunderstand him, he would ask him to meditate for a quarter of an hour a day upon the text *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul*. "It is time, dear Simon," he exclaims, "to undeceive the King. The time is nearer than he thinks when the King of Kings will say to him, 'Give an account of thy stewardship.'"

This honest indignation, this plain speaking to a man accustomed to hear only flatteries, does one's heart good. It makes one want to stand up and cheer. It should, however, be said in justice to John that, when asked to do so, he had appointed Michael Vaz, and that he was

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sincerely anxious to aid religion, even if he did not give it the paramount place Francis demanded. It is also to his credit that he took his rebuke in a spirit of humility, where most rulers would have been deeply incensed, and might have imposed severe punishment. Heads have fallen for much less.

Further it should be said that the King had written to John de Castro on March 8, 1546 (though this fact was probably unknown as yet to Francis), informing the Governor that, as it is the essential duty of Christian princes to watch over the interests of religion, he expected him to protect the native Christians, to punish the Rajah of Jafnapatam, and to prohibit heathen worship in his territories. If Francis had known of this he would hardly have written to John as he did, though the royal instructions to the Governor might still have seemed to him not sufficiently explicit to meet the case.

The remedy for the evils, as Francis saw it, was that strict injunctions were to be sent to the Portuguese officials, making them one and all responsible for the conversion of the heathen. The astonishing proposal was offered that every official should be obliged to send a written report to the King as to the number of conversions that had occurred under his jurisdiction. And the King must let his officials understand that he had taken a solemn oath upon the Holy Name of God to punish by confiscation of property and imprisonment anyone who failed to produce positive proof that he had done all in his power to spread the Christian faith.

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No opportunity should be given to the secular authorities to explain away the instructions, or to shelve their responsibilities upon the missionaries. Therefore let the missionaries be exempted by name from the provisions of the proclamation : they could be counted upon to do their share of the work, and more.

The proposal was in all conscience sufficiently drastic, and its advisability is open to serious question. To make promotion in the army and civil service depend upon the number of converts secured might easily, if insisted upon, have done more harm than good. It would be easy to imagine an official being as ruthless in compelling the natives to accept baptism as he had formerly been in defrauding them. Compulsion, however, was not in the mind of Francis ; all that he wanted was that the Portuguese officials should not interfere with the missionaries.²

In any case criticism of these suggestions in the light of modern colonial methods or liberal principles would be altogether too facile. Francis was confronted with the problem of cleansing the Augean Stables of the Portuguese administration in the Orient. Such a task was not to be accomplished by the spraying of a little rose-water over filth. We do not know the situation as he knew it. Perhaps the soundest judgment passed upon Francis's letter to the King is that of Edith Anne Stewart : "Not many will think these proposals practicable or wise, but there are few who would care to say so very loudly in the presence of such prophetic passion as this. Portuguese

² Cf. Brou, vol. II, pp. 9-10.

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India was in an abominable state, and Xavier was at the same time a man of vision and a man of action. Desperate measures were called for. In the light of calmer days desperate measures often seem more absurd than at the time they really were.”³

The letter to Rodriguez of the same date is little more than a summary of what Francis wrote to the King. Rodriguez, being in Portugal, could emphasize the same things in a private interview. He was begged, as usual, to send more men to the Indian missions, men hardy in body and tried in virtue. The same appeal was made in a letter to Ignatius.

One or two points in the letter to Ignatius deserve special mention. Francis asks for preachers—for of all those sent out by Rodriguez not one was of much service in this capacity. Above all Francis wishes for a man of great gifts and holiness, “whose vigour and zeal may stir me out of my spiritual torpor.” This was presumably a priest who could give retreats to his fellow priests—a work which Francis, with touching humility, seems to have thought beyond his own powers.

The previous request (made in 1542) about a different Lenten season for India was now withdrawn. Further experience had shown Francis that, in view of the settlements being so widely scattered, what would be of benefit in one place would not be of benefit in another. So, while admitting that there are many who disagree with

³ Page 259. This has all the more weight coming from a writer who, sturdily Protestant, has sometimes adversely criticised a man whom, however, she thoroughly admires.

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him, he thinks that for the sake of the common good no change should be made.

He tells Ignatius that though he has not quite made up his mind about Japan—as to whether to go himself, or to send others—on the whole he is strongly inclined to go himself. It was of course impossible to ask for the advice of Ignatius, because of the time it would take for an answer to come.

The lack of means of speedy communication proved to be providential. For Ignatius was about to recall Francis to Europe; his counsel, as one of the original group of Jesuits, was needed. Now that Peter Faber (whom Ignatius had thought of as his successor) was dead, Francis was generally considered the logical person to become the second General of the Society. As it happened, letters crossed, and by the time Ignatius' instructions arrived in India Francis had already sailed for Japan.

Francis, having sent off his letters from Cochin, addressed himself to the affairs of the Indian missions. In the absence of their superior some of the Jesuits there had taken too much upon themselves; and one man had been insubordinate.

Francis Enriquez should have been at his post in Travancore. Instead, finding the work there somewhat difficult owing to the withdrawal of the Rajah's favour, he had gone to Chaliyam, near Calicut, where the Rajah of Tanor was holding out hopes of a political conversion. Francis ordered him back to Travancore.

Yet the term is perhaps misleading. Undoubtedly Francis would have dealt with Enriquez in summary

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fashion had he not obeyed, but Enriquez was persuaded rather than ordered to return to Travancore. The tone Francis employed towards him is evident in his letter of October 19th, which is full of kind encouragement. Enriquez is told not to be despondent because the fruit of his work is not at once obvious. Let him think rather of the children he baptized before they died, and then reflect how very few people, in India or anywhere else, reach heaven except those who die before fourteen and in their baptismal innocence. Francis lived to see his confidence fully repaid, for Enriquez established nineteen new churches in Travancore within three and a half years, despite all the difficulties created by the Rajah's opposition.

The case of Mansilhas was a serious one. He had flatly refused to obey orders to go to the Moluccas. Such a man had no place in the Society, so he was dismissed. He remained, however, in India as a secular priest, and it is impossible to think very severely of the stupid oaf. To the end he retained an immense affection for his former superior, and was one of the chief witnesses at the first preliminary Process for the canonization of Francis. He died in Cochin in 1565, refusing in his last moments any other than Jesuit ministrations.

By the end of January 1548 Francis was again among the Paravas. Whatever their faults may have been, ingratitude and lack of affection were not among them. Francis was everywhere greeted by singing processions, and the people flung down palm-leaves and cotton garments for him to walk upon. Not content with this, they would carry him, his neck hung with garlands, shoulder-

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high into church.⁴ We may be sure that Francis was not less pleased to see his first converts than they were to see him.

After the demonstrations were over, sober work had to be done. The missionaries were summoned to Manapar for a retreat and a conference upon missionary activities. Each man was interviewed in private by Francis and closely questioned, so that a full knowledge of the situation might be known. This was very necessary, for most of them were strangers to him.

The choice of the Fathers, after the defection of Mansilhas, of Anthony Criminale as their superior (though he was only twenty-eight and had been hardly two years in India) was confirmed by Francis. He was destined to be the first Jesuit martyr.

Under Criminale were Alphonso Cipriano, an old Spanish soldier who had entered the Society at the age of fifty-eight, and who was now well over sixty, and Henry Enriquez. Upon getting his orders to report to the Fishery Coast, poor Enriquez, who was very much of an invalid, took it as a sentence of death. It is pleasant to record that he lived fifty years more, all that time among the Paravas, and was the compiler of the first Tamil grammar and dictionary.

To these there were joined two lay-coadjutors, Em-

⁴ The enthusiasm aroused by Francis in southern India was such that there is some reason to believe that he was enrolled among the countless minor deities of popular Hinduism. The cult, if it ever existed, could have been only local and evanescent. Such things, even today, are common in India. It must not be supposed, however, that this happened among the Paravas themselves.

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manuel Morales and Adam Francisco, and four native priests, of whom Francis Coelho seems to have been the most satisfactory. All these were assigned to their duties in the villages under the general supervision of Criminale.

Before leaving the Fishery Coast Francis wrote out careful instructions for the guidance of the missionaries working there. These show that practical wisdom which was always one of his most marked characteristics. The main emphasis of the work among the Paravas, he tells his colleague, is to be laid upon the baptizing of infants, and the catechizing of the older children. At the same time the adults are not to be neglected. The *kanakapullai* are to be maintained, and are to instruct the women on Saturdays and the men on Sundays.

A great point is made of the necessity of reconciling enemies, and public profession of the forgiving of offences should be demanded. There must be no clerical entanglement in lawsuits, which are to be dealt with by the Portuguese commandants. This was a very delicate matter: Francis had no wish to appear to be meddling with things outside his jurisdiction, yet nobody knew better than he what kind of men the commandants only too often were. So he discreetly adds that if the arbitration of a priest is preferred, the case should be dealt with by Criminale, the superior, but only by Criminale.

These Tamils, he goes on, are like children, and should not be dealt with in a spirit of severity. There must be no disparaging talk about the natives in the presence of the Portuguese; rather their faults should be extenuated as those of poor creatures only recently con-

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verted from idolatry. The native priests must be carefully watched, to see that they went regularly to confession and offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with due reverence. If there was at any time need to complain of their behaviour, it should be done in strict privacy, and not a word should ever be written about it in letters, as these might fall into the wrong hands.

The people were to be instructed to inform the priest of any who are sick, so that they might be visited and given the Last Sacraments. At funerals a sermon was to be preached to remind those present that they, too, would have to die, they know not when, and that if they hoped to escape hell and come to the joys of Paradise they must persevere in the Christian life.

Among the Portuguese settlers the conversation of the priests should be confined to spiritual matters. If this rule is adhered to one of two things will happen—either the visitors will be touched by grace and come for more talk of the same sort, or they will be bored and stay away. In that event, Francis remarks, there will be more time for the many duties priests have to discharge. The temptation of idle gossip is to be carefully shunned.

Every missionary must keep to his assigned district, except with the express permission of Anthony Criminale. The whole of the money collected in church, together with any private thank-offerings that are made, is to be distributed to the poor, down to the last particle. Nothing whatever should be kept by the priests, because their maintenance is provided for by the Portuguese Crown.

All this was, no doubt, merely the written corrobora-

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tion of what Francis had told his assistants during their conference at Manapar. We shall find that from now on it was his settled practice to give detailed instructions in writing to his assistants. It is important to notice the fact that Francis always minutely regulated the affairs of the missions, and always with profound wisdom, for some Protestant critics, who have not taken the trouble to inform themselves, have represented him as a hare-brained enthusiast incapable of following any settled plan.

Enthusiast he indeed was. But he planned everything. If there are times when Francis seems to be rushing in a great hurry from place to place, it was only because he was under the obligation of organising an immense territory. For this letters alone were insufficient ; he had to see with his own eyes what was being done. He was a very remarkable administrator.

This is not to say that he made no miscalculations. These, however, were the miscalculations of a man who always expects two and two to make four. His logic was faultless, but he was sometimes insufficiently informed about human motives. Shrewd as he was in his judgment of men, he was a little too inclined to commit the fault of generous souls and to put too much reliance on good intentions. Such a miscalculation had occurred with regard to Ceylon, and was to occur again.

Being so near to the island at the beginning of 1548, Francis is reputed to have made a visit to Kandy, a great centre of Buddhist worship, in whose pagoda is still venerated the print of the Gautama's foot upon a rock, and one of his teeth. It should, however, be said that it is

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by no means certain that Francis ever was in Ceylon. The absence of all mention of the matter in his letters may, perhaps, be accounted for on the ground that the Bishop and the Governor enjoined silence. Yet this is hardly a sufficient explanation. Why should they have wanted silence? Nevertheless, the tradition persists about a mission to the Rajah of Kandy.⁵

What is clear enough is that this Rajah and (according to some likely enough reports) even the Rajah of Jafnapatam, had offered to become Christians, on the condition that the Portuguese supplied them with an armed force to protect them from their enemies. Castro, busy enough elsewhere with his military operations, was unwilling to spare men at such a time. This was an attitude which Francis, who thought that religion should be always placed above political or military expediency, could not understand at all. As he viewed the matter, however doubtful the motives of the Rajah might be, his baptism would provide an opportunity for missionaries to christianise the people. He was willing in such a case to act as an intermediary, but only with the propagation of the Faith as his single object.

The outcome of the affair at Kandy proved to be fruitless, whether or not Francis had anything to do with it. The Governor, despite his reluctance, consented to send a force of a hundred and fifty men to Ceylon, but the Rajah was seized with a suspicion that the Portuguese intended to dethrone him at the first opportunity. The Portuguese expedition, hearing of his counter-plot to massacre them

⁵ Cf. Brou, vol. II, pp. 23-7.

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as soon as they reached his capital, burnt all their impedimenta, and cut their way through a Cinghalese army of eight thousand men to safety. It was the end of the project of bringing Ceylon *en masse* to Christianity.

Possibly it was in furtherance of this project that Francis went in March to Goa to see John de Castro, the Governor whom he had not yet met. But quite apart from the new question of Kandy, we must not forget that there was the old question of Jafnapatam in which he was still passionately interested. Hearing that Castro had gone to Bassein to the north, Francis followed him there. Ceylon was too urgent an issue to leave until the Governor's return.

John de Castro, one of the greatest of all Portuguese administrators, was not only a distinguished soldier but a good classical scholar, a mathematician, and even something of a scientist. It was he who originated the theory that the Red Sea got its colour from the coral on its floor. Though fallacious, it was at least ingenious.

Incorruptible as he was, and simple in his private life to the point of austerity, he nevertheless indulged on official occasions his love of display. The rococo celebration at Goa of his great victory at Diu provoked from Queen Catherine the epigram that he had conquered like a Christian and had triumphed like a pagan.

Being primarily a soldier, he was (though pious) inclined to be impatient with the demands of clerics. The letter that King John had written him after the complaints of Michael Vaz and Francis Xavier did not increase his friendliness towards priests. He was aware that the com-

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plaints were justified, but he was doing the best he could, and he resented clerical criticism.

Nevertheless, he was at once impressed by the sanctity of Francis and won by his charm. He promised to help in the affairs of Ceylon and in the founding of a Jesuit college at Malacca. In return he made Francis promise to stay with him at Goa for a year. Though not yet forty-eight he was prematurely old and knew himself to be dying. Nobody could give a name to his disease : it was surmised to be grief over the vanishing glory of Portugal. As he felt that his end was near, he wished to have Francis with him at his death-bed.

The end came on June 6th, sooner than anyone had expected. With failing breath he asked pardon for anything harsh he might have written to the King about his subordinates, and swore that he had never defrauded anyone. Upon opening his private desk, they found it to contain only three *reals* and a discipline clotted with blood.

But now Francis could not leave for the Comorin coast because of the monsoon, and because he was expecting a ship to arrive from Portugal with new recruits. In preparation, therefore, for his trip to Japan he gave himself to prayer, seeking the guidance of God, as he had done three years ago at Mylapore.

As far as possible he lived in complete retirement, spending a great part of each day and night before the Blessed Sacrament. His eyes were often seen to be full of tears, often full of fire. His absorption in God was such that sometimes he did not seem to know what he was doing or where he was. Heat and cold alike left him in-

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sensible. Yet because of the furnace within his breast he would rush out into the college garden and be heard crying, "No more, O Lord, no more!" There were occasions when he was found entranced, not to be roused even to attend to urgent business. His aspect itself was enough to create devotion in those who saw it. They noticed his constant upward look, his brimming eyes, his joy, his tremulous ejaculations. It was not necessary for him to speak to make men wish to serve God — his glowing countenance sufficed. Radiance had always been one of his most notable characteristics, yet never so much as now.⁶ The man of affairs was one of the greatest mystics.

On May 10th, the Feast of Pentecost, the Bishop baptized Anjiro and his two companions. A magnificent ceremony was made of the occasion, and the neophytes went to the cathedral to the sound of trumpets, flutes, cymbals and all the church bells of Goa.⁷ The Portuguese loved this sort of thing.

Anjiro was given the name of Paul of the Holy Faith, the other Japanese those of John and Anthony. Everybody was amazed by the aptitude shown by the new converts, especially by Paul. In eight months, as Francis was a little later to write to Ignatius, he had actually learned to speak and write Portuguese perfectly. And he had the Gospel of Matthew and a commentary upon it by heart. No better interpreter for Japan could be wished for.

So little was he like the other students of the college

⁶ Cf. Coleridge, II, pp. 46, 61-2.

⁷ Cf. Bellesort, p. 224.

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that he lived as one of the community, dining in their refectory and wearing a lay-brother's habit, though, as a man with a wife in Japan, he was not strictly speaking a member of the Society.⁸

On September 4th and October 9th ships arrived from Portugal with the largest number of recruits so far sent out to the missions. Among those who arrived were four priests—the two of whom we shall hear most being Gaspar Baertz, a Fleming who was a Master of Arts of Louvain and a man of varied experience in arms and affairs, and Anthony Gomez, also gifted, but with altogether too high an opinion of his own capabilities.

Of the six Jesuits who were either scholastics or lay-brothers, one deserves a special word of mention now, for he was destined to accompany Francis to Japan. This was John Fernandez.

He had been a wealthy silk-merchant in Cordova before his conversion, and had prided himself upon being a man of fashion. Though he had not attended any university, he had a fine mind, broad as well as acute, and astonishing linguistic ability. Francis was strongly for having him ordained, but this, out of humility, Fernandez refused, preferring to serve God as a layman. Cosmo de Torres used to say of his fellow-missionary: "If Japan has to thank Father Xavier for having brought her the faith, she has to thank Brother Fernandez for its conservation after the departure of the saint."⁹

Anthony Gomez arrived with a document in his pocket

⁸ Cf. Brou, vol. II, p. 81.

⁹ Brou, vol. II, p. 237.

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signed by Rodriguez—who had taken this upon himself because he had assumed that Francis was absent from India—appointing him Rector of the college at Goa. The choice turned out to be singularly unfortunate. Gomez was a good speaker—one of those men who use a ringing voice and all the appropriate gestures to say nothing in particular—but his judgment was poor and he had little skill in managing men. He was fussy, officious, and consequential. Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong, he brought out with him a ready-made scheme for remodeling the college upon the pattern of the universities of Paris and Coimbra. He knew nothing of the Oriental mind. According to his scheme all the students were to become Jesuits. The difficulty, as Francis knew, was to make them decent Christians.¹⁰

The man had immense confidence in himself, and a complacency that was really wonderful. We know what Francis thought of him, yet Gomez wrote to Rodriguez on December 10th giving an account of how he had explained to Francis that the nerve and driving-power of the Society, according to the idea of Ignatius, was in the colleges. It never seemed to strike him as odd that it was he who had to enlighten Francis about the true inwardness of the Ignatian idea. Nor could he imagine that Francis was not greatly impressed by the exposition. "All this," he writes to Rodriguez, "fully satisfied him."¹¹

Francis was by no means so satisfied as the fatuous Gomez supposed. He understood the conditions at the

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, vol. II, 62-3.

¹¹ Delplace (*Sel. Ind. Ep.*, p. 57).

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college. At this time a dozen different languages were spoken there. Besides Indians from various provinces, there were Malays, Moluccans, Cinghalese, Chinese, Japanese, and several negroes. A Nestorian bishop from Travancore had died there the previous year, reconciled to the Catholic Church ; and three Buddhist ex-priests were enrolled among the students.

Though called a college, it gave elementary as well as advanced instruction. The rule, as has been said, was that students had to be thirteen before they could be admitted. But this rule was evidently not very strictly enforced, because we find Criminale writing that the ages of the students are disparate, ranging from seven or eight to twenty or twenty-one.¹² The principal difficulty was with the older boys, who were only too likely to introduce vicious practices. Yet it was impossible to take only those who retained the innocence of youth — though Lancilotti thought nobody above the age of six should be received —¹³ because boys who were admitted too young would forget their native language and so be unable to preach to their own people after ordination. Since the main object of the college was to provide an indigenous clergy, there seemed no way of avoiding the disorders that arose from bringing together a crowd of young men who had only lately emerged from paganism, and who retained so many of paganism's moral defects. The problem called for something more than orotund eloquence for its solution.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

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Despite the appointment made by Rodriguez, Francis, who was a keen judge of character, would have removed Gomez and given the position to Baertz. This he was fully empowered to do, for though Rodriguez as Provincial of Portugal was technically his immediate superior, Francis had a free hand with regard to Indian matters. Baertz was at least as able as Gomez, and he was far more amply supplied with the precious virtue of humility.¹⁴

The residents of Goa, however, vigorously protested when Francis proposed sending Gomez to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf. He was a Portuguese, and Baertz was a Fleming. The Goans greatly relished a florid style of oratory. Moreover, Gomez was of a rather striking presence, and knew how to cultivate the social graces which make a man acceptable to ladies and big-wigs. They simply could not bear to part with such an ornament to their city.

Francis might have persisted in his decision had not Baertz himself begged not to be appointed Rector. Reluctantly a compromise was effected : Gomez should be Rector, but with his authority strictly limited to the college ; Camerino should be the superior over the missionary priests. As for Baertz, he was sent to open up a new field of work at Ormuz.

Socotra, whose unhappy condition had long weighed

¹⁴ Pagès gives in an appendix (vol. II, pp. 437-8) Baertz's profession of humility. He declares himself ready to work in the kitchen, to scrub the floors, to go anywhere, to do anything, to wear coarse and tattered clothing, to suffer all discomforts and trials according to the will of his superiors and for the love of Christ. His words have the unmistakable ring of sincerity, and his subsequent career proves how genuine the man was.

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upon Francis's mind, was provided with two priests ; but the new Governor, Garcia de Sá, wishing to avoid giving offence to the Ottoman power, countermanded the appointment. It was the death-warrant to Christianity there.

The place to which Baertz was assigned was at this time one of the richest and most corrupt cities of the world. Duarte Barbosa, the cousin of Magellan, has described its wealth and its vice as equally inordinate.¹⁵ Transferred, since the burning of the original Ormuz by the Tartars, to an adjoining island, it had become the Venice of the East, a meeting-place for the merchants of Asia-Minor, Persia, Arabia, India, and China. It was one of the most torrid spots on the world's surface, and several travellers tell how at certain seasons of the year its inhabitants could find no sleep at night except in the water cisterns on their roofs.¹⁶ It had no natural facilities except its harbours, yet it had been so developed by human ingenuity that its name was now a synonym for luxury, ostentation, and voluptuous ease. Infamous as it was for elaborate sensuality, it could be matched in this respect by other Oriental ports. Its reputation was unique, however, for infinitely adroit commercial trickery ; and this must have been great indeed to have surpassed Goa's. To such a cess-pool of evil was the stolid, solid Baertz dispatched.

Though Francis reposed every confidence in his judgment and virtue, he did not let him go without giving him detailed instructions in writing, telling him that they should be read over at least once a week. The document

¹⁵ Pages 41-2.

¹⁶ Cf. Linschoten, vol. I, p. 51.

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is invaluable for the light it throws on Francis, for we may be sure that the methods he tells Baertz to follow are those he had tested in his own practice. Yet this extremely important paper has usually been hurriedly passed over by biographers.¹⁷

Francis begins by telling Baertz that he must take for preference the most humble employments : he is to visit the poor in the hospitals and almshouses, caring both for their bodies and their souls, and do the same for those in prison.

If, upon hearing the confession of a rich merchant, discovery is made of the need for restitution, and if this cannot be effected because it is no longer known where the defrauded persons are living, Baertz is on no account to accept any part of the amount for distribution to the poor, but to direct that it shall be handed over to the Confraternity of Mercy.

Preaching is of the highest value to souls. Controversial subjects, however, should be avoided in favour of presenting the enormity of sin and the terrors of hell. "Threaten them," he writes, "with unexpected death, but mix with these considerations the remembrance of the Cross of Christ, by which He atoned for our sins."

In the pulpit, when reproving vices, Baertz is never to mention any person by name. And when a private reproof is given, care must be taken to temper severity with gentleness. One must be particularly circumspect when dealing with people of position. "For," Francis adds with

¹⁷ It is found in the *Monumenta Xaveriana*, vol. I, pp. 870-880. A translation of it is given by Father Coleridge (vol. II, pp. 109-138).

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quiet sarcasm, "if a harsh voice or a lowering brow should be added to the natural disagreeableness of a reproof, I am very much afraid that men of such fastidious delicacy will not be able to restrain their bile."

Penitents should be urged to make a general confession, for which they ought to take two or three days to prepare. If they have any restitution or retraction to make, or any sinful attachment to break off, let them do it before they confess. Promises, however solemnly made, are not to be trusted.

On the other hand, care should be taken not to frighten sinners away by too great a rigour. "However vile may be the sins they have to confess, help out their bashfulness, assuring them of your compassion, and seem not to be surprised at anything you may hear." To prevent them despairing of finding pardon, a "motherly indulgence" must be used, and if it is necessary to free penitents from a sense of shame, the confessor would do well to tell them in general terms of the sins of his own past life so as to encourage them.

He should find out if their faith is still sound, for the practice of sin—and the example set by many priests (among whom Francis might have included the badly-conducted Vicar-General of Ormuz)—has sapped the confidence of numbers of souls in the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. After this is done, pains should still be taken to "rake out" the faults that have not been confessed. In a town like Ormuz, where unjust and usurious contracts are taken for granted, people's consciences are quite untroubled about such mat-

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ters and must be awakened. Baertz is told that all this especially applies to the King's officials, the military commandant, and the treasurers. "Do not ask them merely whether they have defrauded anyone, for of course they will say no, custom having taken with them the place of justice. Rather squeeze out by cautious questioning the details of their business transactions."

Baertz is to be scrupulously obedient to the Vicar-General, and to cultivate the friendship of the local priests. But he must refuse all requests of applying to the Commandant for personal privileges. "The frequenting of the ante-chambers of the great will leave you little time for your own duties."

Then follow instructions as to how he is to convert the heathen to the Christian faith—methods with which we are already familiar : the bell, the catechism, and the rest. These need not be described again.

There is a long passage in this letter, the whole of which is a model of commonsense and psychological insight, on practical as compared with theoretical knowledge. A few sentences are quoted here : "Wherever you are, even if you are only passing through a place on a journey, try to find out exactly what are its customs, the opinions prevailing there, the mode of government, the legal usages, the favourite forms of trickery of the merchants—whatever has any bearing upon society. Believe my experience, nothing of all this is useless for the physician of souls to know."

Francis points out that men of the world commonly despise religious people largely because these are as a rule

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ignorant of practical matters. But in cases where they find it is otherwise, they veer to an enthusiastic admiration for such clerics. The sort of knowledge he has in mind is not to be gleaned from "dead books" but from living men, and is worth more than whole libraries of speculative philosophy.

This, however, is no reason why books should not be studied. On the contrary, Holy Scripture, the Fathers, and ascetic and moral treatises—all these ought to be diligently consulted. But we must never forget—and here Francis touches the nerve of the question—that men listen attentively only to the things that come home to their consciences. "You must therefore reveal men to themselves if you wish to have them hanging on your words. And to know men you must be much in their society, studying them, observing them. So thumb again and again these your living books."

No patronage of any kind is to be accepted, lest an obligation be created. There is no need, however, to carry this to such an extreme as to refuse an invitation to dinner or small courtesies, such as the present of a basket of fruit. These presents ought, nevertheless, to be immediately passed on to the hospitals or the jails, so as to obviate the suspicion of embittered minds. "Never forget," Francis concludes, "that you are a member of the Society of Jesus."

The summary given here of this remarkable document does it much less than justice. It deserves to be carefully studied. But a summary is better than nothing, for it shows at least with what forethought Francis laid

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all his plans, and that he left nothing to take care of itself.

All this is equally true of his other activities during these last months before he sailed for Japan. On September 9, 1548, he paid a brief visit to the Comorin coast to inspect the work. By the end of October we find him in Cochin, and by early November in Goa. By the middle of November he is back again in Cochin to arrange for the establishment of a new college there. Some time during February 1549 he visited Bassein to see Garcia de Sá on business. Then upon his return to Goa Francis began to make his final preparations for departure. It was during April that he wrote the long letter to Baertz already given in digest, and about the same time another to Camerino (but plainly meant rather for Anthony Gomez) about the division of authority at Goa. He had now put all the affairs in India and Ormuz in order, and was ready to leave for Japan.

He devoted January to letter writing. On the 26th of that month he addressed King John once more, using, if possible, even stronger terms than he had used before: "It is common talk in India that your Highness does not use your royal power for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, but only for the purpose of scraping together riches for yourself." He therefore tells the King bluntly, "This is not the least of the reasons why I intend to fly to Japan in the extreme East, to labour with more usefulness than has been possible here." Again he reminds John of the dreadful hour of death when "God avert it! you may be sentenced to remain forever outside Paradise."

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Francis's letters during this month to Ignatius and Rodriguez contain his plan of campaign for India and Japan. A new idea had occurred to him: could not Rodriguez come out to India himself? In his letters of January 20th and 25th, and of February 1st, he presses this fascinating proposal upon his friend. Being so close to their Portuguese Majesties, Simon could easily secure plenipotentiary powers which would enable him to force the commandants and royal treasurers to do their duty. "So make it your business, my dearest Simon, to come as quickly as possible with many men of our Society. We want them to be from thirty to forty years of age." The eager, enthusiastic man pours out his heart, writing three letters by the same mail, and, upon winding each letter up, starting all over again. "But you know my old bad habit, that when I write to you I can never leave off." With Rodriguez in India and Francis in Japan, both ably assisted, and with Portuguese rapacity effectually curbed at last, the whole Orient could be brought to Christ. His imagination kindled at the thought, the old, ever-fresh dream.

The two letters to Ignatius are written in a less effusive strain than those to Rodriguez, for Ignatius was the General of the Society. That of January 14th concludes: "I humbly beg you on my knees (for so it is that I write this letter) never to cease to implore God for me in your holy Sacrifices and prayers, that He may give me the grace clearly to know and fully to carry out His most holy will. Your least and useless son, Francis." The letters

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contain information about the arrangements made in India, and about Paul of the Holy Faith, who has such wonderful things to relate of Japan. An account written by Paul himself is enclosed. This would incidentally prove how apt a student the young Japanese had shown himself to be in so short a space of time.

The plan for the conquest of Japan was simplicity itself—that of striking at the head. “I have made up my mind to go first to the king of the country, and then to the universities and seats of learning, and I hope with great gain of souls. As Paul tells me, the religions of Japan are said to have been introduced from Chinghinquo,¹⁸ a city beyond China and Cathay.” After the royal favour had been secured and an entrance gained into the Buddhist schools, it was Francis’s intention to write to the universities of Europe for specially trained men capable of meeting the “bonzes” on their own ground.¹⁹

Alas, there was no true university in Japan, and the “bonzes” were not very learned, or the “King” more than a figurehead. Paul, though an extremely intelligent man, was not well educated, and he had lived a long way from his country’s capital. Without intending it, he had misinformed Francis on matters of high importance. Therefore, sound as was the scheme on paper, it had to be revised in face of the facts as they were discovered to be.

On April 21st, Easter Sunday, Francis Xavier, accom-

¹⁸ According to some writers this was in northern India near the mouths of the Ganges. The more probable identification seems to be with Tibet.

¹⁹ Francis always uses the term “bonze” for the Buddhist monks, and it is retained here. But it properly applies only to an inferior order of the priesthood.

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panied by the priest Cosmo de Torres, Fernandez the lay-brother, Paul the Japanese, a Tamil named Amador, and a Chinese baptized as Emmanuel, took ship at Cochin for Malacca, the first stage of their adventurous journey to Japan.

CHAPTER XV

THE VOYAGE TO JAPAN

THERE now began the third of Francis Xavier's great missionary undertakings, and in some ways the most important of them all. He was about to preach the Cross among a people of high civilisation, proud, tough in mind, the best material he had encountered.

The six weeks' voyage to Malacca was pleasantly uneventful. Except for one storm the weather was beautiful, with cloudless days, and nights of stars. There was no scurvy or fever on board, or even sea-sickness. Nor was there so much as a glimpse of the sail of one of the dreaded Achinese *proas*. Sea and sky seemed to be an external manifestation of the serenity of Francis's soul.

On May 31, 1549, the party of missionaries, among whom were two who were to go on to the Moluccas, landed at Malacca. There the exuberant, volatile inhabitants came out to greet Francis, and his heart was touched even though he no longer had much confidence in their moral stability. But the children singing the hymns he had taught them, and answering the questions of the catechism pat—they were always his hope.

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Immediately he found a work of spiritual mercy to perform. Alfonso Martinez, who had been the Bishop's Vicar-General at Malacca for thirty years, was at the point of death. He had not given positive scandal, like the Vicar-General at Ormuz, but he had lived laxly, and had carried out his duties as a mere matter of ecclesiastical routine. Now that he had come to die, a terrible melancholy had seized his soul, and he believed himself beyond redemption. The other priests tried to induce him to throw himself upon the infinite mercy of God, but he only groaned in despair.

When he heard that Francis had arrived, he tried to get up and dress to receive him, but fainted away from the effort. Upon coming to, he saw the face of Francis bending over the bed, and heard the kind voice saying, "Come, Alfonso, make your confession. Turn to Jesus Christ who is ready to pardon your sins." But fresh floods of despair swept over him.

Francis then began to pray for him to God, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the angels and saints—including, we may be sure, Peter Faber—and vowed himself to Masses for the souls in Purgatory. At last Martinez softened, made his confession, and received the Last Sacraments, before dying in Francis's arms.

The Governor, Peter da Silva, a son of Vasco da Gama, received the missionaries with great honour. He loaded them with gifts: thirty measures of the choicest pepper (to be exchanged in Japan for the materials necessary for the building of a church), a barrel of wine for Mass; and he spent two-hundred gold pieces for presents to be given

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to the Japanese Court. Francis was careful to mention this munificence when writing to John III.

The Jesuits sent by Francis to Malacca he found were doing excellent work, which he praised to the full. Francis Perez, so he writes to the Fathers in India on June 22nd, made him positively ashamed of himself, such was the man's zeal despite his ill-health. Why, six priests would hardly suffice to hear all the confessions to which he excites the Malaccans by his preaching! And Rocco Oliviera, the lay-brother with him, had opened a primary school for boys. Again the enthusiasm of Francis flares: they read well, and can repeat all the common prayers and the Creed without any mistake—and that, adds Francis, is what very few people can do. One never hears an oath or a bad word from them. They walked in procession; they said their litanies with down-cast eyes. According to Francis they were little angels. No doubt they were on their very best behaviour just then; probably further acquaintance with them would have modified his opinion; but at least all this shows how ready he was to believe the best of everybody, that in spite of many previous disillusionments he was lavish with praise. It was such a relief to get away from India, with its foul corruptions, and to be about to enter Japan, where there would be no Portuguese officials to contend with, or to give bad example and scandal to the natives.

There is a new note in the letter Francis wrote to John III at this time. In June he had administered the King two such wiggings as that exalted personage had probably never had to listen to in his life, and which he

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would have put up with from nobody except Francis. There was no use, however, in keeping on scolding. All that needed to be said about the conditions in India had already been said. How much pleasanter to be able to write of the reception he had received at Malacca. The letter is nearly all about the munificence of Peter da Silva. "As I am quite unable to make him any return, because of my poverty, for the many kindnesses he has done me, I beg your Highness to supply my deficiency, by showing special favour to this splendid officer." Francis certainly took a good deal for granted from the King, who was now charged, by the very man who had so fiercely reproved him, with the obligation of paying his debts for him. But the utter selflessness of it all was charming. It was impossible to resist Francis.

Yet Francis did after all have a way of repaying the King, which he describes in his letter to the Fathers at Goa written on the feast of Corpus Christi. And he includes (strangely enough) "the Portuguese in India for the very great love with which they treat us" among those to whom the Society was in debt. Less strangely he says, "We must repay them by constantly applying ourselves to the work of securing their eternal salvation." But he adds that even if there were no question of gratitude, the Jesuits should do this merely out of common charity. Probably Francis thought he had better put that in lest the saturnine Lancilotti (who had so often heard him express somewhat different opinions of the Portuguese) should smile sardonically.

We find Francis, during this stay in Malacca, acting

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in what was a new capacity for him—that of match-maker. He had met there an old friend of his, named Christopher Carvalho, who had been living a wandering life, constantly in danger, and also constantly exposed to temptation. Francis urged him to settle down and marry; he had a wife already picked out for him—an orphan at Goa. So eloquent was Francis about her many virtues, charms and graces that he actually induced Christopher to promise to marry her—sight unseen. Her father was Diego Froez who had bought an office under the Crown, with the patent of its reversion to the man who married his daughter. So there was a job as well as a wife waiting for Christopher at Goa.

Whatever the job was, it would seem to have been one somewhat below the dignity of a *hidalgo*; but that difficulty, too, was got over by the ingenious Francis. He therefore wrote to Camerino and Gomez suggesting that they persuade the Treasurer to allow the reversion to be sold, and the proceeds given as a dowry to the girl. The Fathers were reminded of the frequent hospitality and kindness they had received from Diego's widow (we have all met her) whom he affectionately alludes to as "our Mother." She had fallen on evil days, so here was an excellent chance of repaying her. Thus everybody concerned will be benefited: "Mother" will see her daughter make a good marriage; the girl will acquire a husband, vouched for by Francis; and Christopher—now tired of his roving life—a wife even more highly recommended. By the time Francis had done talking Christopher was impatiently waiting for the next boat for India, where no

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doubt he found a well-brought-up maiden willing enough to take the man chosen for her. After all, it is not everybody who gets a husband hand-picked by a saint.

Another letter to the Fathers at Goa gives a further instance of Francis's constant thoughtfulness for others. He had not forgotten the deposed Sultana of Ternate, Isabelle. Some time previously he had written to King John, asking that a pension be granted her. A reply about this matter was now due. So he instructs Camerino and Gomez to open any letter addressed to him that should arrive under the royal seal. In the event of there being no letter for him from the King, then the Fathers are to be sure to call on the Governor to ask whether he has not received any instructions about the pension. Isabelle deserves to be well provided for.

The same letter shows the affectionate interest Francis had in everybody associated with him. He asks for news about each of the Fathers and Brothers, how they are in health, what they are doing, what progress they are making in the spiritual life, whether any new recruits have arrived from Portugal, and (if so) whether any of them have a gift for preaching, and just how great a gift. "I want you to fill two or three large sheets of paper about all this, and to tell it to me so that you make me see it with my own eyes." Each of the missionaries should write to him, and he begs them not to wait until they have a letter from him first, because, much as he would like to write a personal letter to every one of them, he simply does not have the leisure to do so.

The boys in the college are not forgotten. It would be

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too much to expect that all of them should write (Francis knew boys !), but perhaps one—"let us say Diego of Mozambique"—could write on behalf of all.

These intimate touches become all the more valuable when we remember that the letters in which they occur were mainly about the affairs of the missions, concerning which the vigilance of Francis never relaxed.

Thus on June 23, 1549, he writes confidentially to Rodriguez asking whether there is a man available—one perhaps who has already had the necessary experience as Rector at the College of Coimbra—who could be sent out to take over the rectorship at Goa. Gomez, he explains, has a gift for preaching, but he lacks the qualities needed by an administrative superior.

To the missionaries in the Spice Islands he sends a warning that they must hold themselves in readiness to join him in Japan, as soon as the summons should reach them. And the same warning is addressed to the Fathers in India : "Some of them may quite expect to be ordered to Japan before long."

Nevertheless he makes careful disposition of them for the interim, because he expects to be absent for several years. A new superior, the delicate but energetic Nicholas Lancilotti, is appointed to the Comorin coast by the letter written from Malacca on June 22nd.

Here arises a really remarkable instance of Francis's "second sight"—one which would seem to be proved fairly conclusively, as the other, relating to the death of Peter Faber, can hardly be said to be. Criminale, it will be remembered, had been appointed by Francis before the

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departure for Malacca. There was no reason why he should have been removed from office—no reason except that he was dead, butchered by the Badages.

We do not know the exact day of his martyrdom, but we know it must have been between the 14th and 18th of June. On the earlier date a missionary wrote a letter (still preserved at Lisbon) which shows that Criminale was then alive, and on the 18th the Fathers on the Comorin Coast met to choose a provisional superior. Therefore Criminale must have died either on the 15th or 16th of the month. Yet on June 22nd, Francis appointed Lancilotti to take Criminale's place.¹ It must be admitted that this cannot be taken as an absolute proof that Francis was aware that Criminale was dead, for the appointment of Lancilotti may have been made merely because Francis thought he was better fitted than Criminale for the position of superior. But there is no indication that he thought anything of the kind. He could have appointed Lancilotti at the time he appointed Criminale. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, by some extraordinary means, Francis was aware of events happening at a distance.

The time had now arrived to sail for Japan. Several Portuguese offered their boats, because they believed that the presence of a saint on board would be an insurance against shipwreck. But none of the boats was ready, and Francis could not wait any longer.

However, a Chinese junk was about to sail, captained by one of those many pirates who masked their misdeeds

¹ Cf. Brou, vol. II, p. 112.

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under the pretence of being merchants. In his squat, square-built, lateen-sailed vessel, Francis, Torres, Fernandez, Anjiro (now Paul of the Holy Faith), the Chinese Christian, Emmanuel, and the Tamil, Amador, prepared to sail for Japan.

Busy up to the last moment of departure, Francis spent his last night at Malacca in the church of Our Lady of the Mount preparing a Portuguese youth of nineteen named John Bravo who had come out to the Indies to seek his fortune, and who found there his vocation instead, for his future life in the Society. He was about to leave for Goa to make the Exercises, and he later became prominent in the Society. Francis gave him at parting a written rule for his life.

The Commandant, Peter da Silva, did not like the looks of the Chinese owner of the junk, and would have much preferred that Francis had selected some other means of passage. As that failed, he made the man pledge his wife and children and his whole property as security for the safe delivery of his passengers. Unless he brought back a letter signed by Francis testifying to the precise carrying out of the contract, Silva bluntly told him, his family would be sold as slaves, and his goods confiscated by the Crown.

Perhaps the conditions were somewhat hard, for the junk might have been lost at sea or captured by the pirates swarming the Chinese seas. Nevertheless, they were accepted, as Francis accepted the dangers of the voyage, of which, as his letters show, he was fully aware. Almost with relish he remarks that the pirates have a

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pleasant way of putting all their prisoners, especially the Portuguese, to death by means of exquisite tortures.

As is so often the case, the dangers encountered were not quite the ones that had been foreseen. They arose, incidentally, because the Chinese, though a pirate, was very pious in his own fashion. On the poop he and his crew set up a Joss, to which they were forever offering plates of food, burning incense and sacrificing cocks. Following on this, lots were cast which had the force of an oracle, and by these everything was decided—the likelihood of storms, the ports at which to stop, the course to take. It made Francis and his companions very indignant to be obliged to witness these proceedings, especially as the oracles gave the advice that the junk should put in to a Chinese port for the winter, which would have meant months of delay.

Acute personal danger drew near to the whole of the party on the Vigil of St. Mary Magdalene (July 21). They were off Cochin-China; the sea was swelling, and continually becoming rougher because of the rising winds; and there was a good deal of bilge-water sloshing about the hold. Fearing to proceed, the pirate captain anchored, with the result that the heavy tub of a junk wallowed in the swell. In the difficulty of keeping one's feet in such a situation, Emmanuel, the Chinese convert, fell into the hold and was very nearly drowned. Only after immense difficulty—and we may be sure mainly because of Francis's own efforts (about which he is silent)—was Emmanuel dragged back to deck unconscious and revived. At the moment when he came to, the cry went

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up that the Captain's daughter had fallen overboard, and as nothing could be done to help her (though again Francis did his best), she was lost before the eyes of her father.

Wailing over the drowned girl, the devotees turned again to their idol, spending the whole of that night and the next day in appeasing his anger. When the lots were cast again, the Captain learned that if Emmanuel had been allowed to perish, as was intended by the gods, the girl would have come to no harm. The inference was obvious.

That night, watching over his companions as they took a little fitful sleep, Francis prayed, waiting for the blow to fall. He had often faced danger before, but probably never had danger come so close. He thought about all the refined ingenuity in torture for which the Chinese were celebrated—and somehow it made him exult. Casting himself upon God, he prepared himself for death.

None except an unimaginative man is without fear, and Francis was far from being unimaginative. Writing to the Fathers in Goa from Japan on November 5, 1549, he devotes several pages to a discussion of this subject, carefully analyzing the way fear is overcome by hope.

He recalls how, because of his indignation with the worship of the Joss, he had prayed that God would exact severe torments upon the common enemy of man who was the author of the heathen superstitions. The fright, so he philosophically draws the conclusion, to which they were exposed that night, was no doubt one of the Devil's temptations—a means of his taking revenge. Perhaps

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God had actually increased the punishment of the Devil in answer to his prayer — which would explain the Satanic spite. “The most certain safeguard against fear,” he writes, “is to have perfect presence of mind and trust in God. For He never permits our enemy the Devil to disturb any except those who, because of their timidity, fail to commit themselves to the divine protection. This is the plague of timidity, that it makes us afraid to trust in God, just as the result of presumption is that those who have trusted in their own strength, become, when overwhelmed with danger, even more helpless than timid men. How can it be with us at our last moments, unless we have all our lives practised hope and confidence in God? No man is really timid who trusts himself to God. Instead of those fears which the Devil uses to deter good men from the service of their Saviour, they should have only one fear—that of failing to do what God has appointed them to do. How much worse to neglect that than to brave what is, after all, the impotent rage of the Devil!”

When the morning came, grey and windy, the Chinese saw Francis standing erect and unperturbed. Few men are so bold as to attack those who are obviously unafraid. Moreover, it must have occurred to the Captain that he had given a pledge, and had left hostages behind him in Malacca. Joss or no Joss, he could not afford to have his passengers harmed.

Exasperation over Chinese dilatoriness (still an exasperation to those who travel in China) was by no means over. The junk would have put in to the island of Sancian, near Canton, if Francis had not thrown out broad

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hints that the Portuguese there (for the trading season) would make things unpleasant for the Captain. But there were no threats that could be effectually used when the junk started for Chin-Cheo for winter quarters. However, just as they were on the point of entering the harbour, news came that the port was full of pirates, so they had to get out without a moment's delay.²

This time, the monsoon won over the Joss, who still obligingly counselled the delay the Chinese wanted. If they made again for Sancian, it would be in the teeth of the wind; whereas on the route to Japan they would have the wind behind them. Quite against their will, the Captain and his crew had to agree that the only thing to do was to sail to Japan.

The seven weeks of the voyage had given Francis and Torres, as well as Fernandez, time to learn something of Japanese. Paul was a good teacher, and had students eager to learn. There were so many things they wanted to know about the country, and these too Paul could tell them. At many points, so far as Francis could gather, the religion of the Japanese almost touched that of the Christians. That, he thought, should make the work of conversion comparatively easy. There were the monastic houses, and the convents of "bonzesses," all wearing the same habit. Here again was a point of contact. They even, so Paul told Francis, or so Francis understood

² Bellesort suggests (p. 231) that though the Captain may have given out that he left so hastily for fear of pirates, his real reason was that he had been informed that the police were watching for him.

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from what Paul told him, had some kind of knowledge of Purgatory and of Hell.

The differences in their customs were not less interesting. One day when Francis asked Paul why the Japanese did not write across instead of down the page, he got the answer, "Why, rather, don't *you* write as we do? The head of a man is at the top, and his feet at the bottom." Francis laughed, and thought so good an answer was worth passing on to Ignatius. Paul was constantly saying things like that. When for instance no Portuguese ship could be got ready in time at Malacca to take the party of missionaries to Japan, Paul had tartly remarked that perhaps it was providential that they would have to go by a junk ; if any Portuguese traders had been along, the Japanese would have been sure to have noticed how very different their practice was from the precept of the preacher. How could they be expected to believe that the Christians thought only of spiritual good, when they observed them to be so greedy for material gain ?

At last, two weeks after leaving the coast of China behind them, they came to anchor in the land-locked harbour of Kagoshima. The town nestled at the foot of a hill. From the junk they could also see in the bay Sakura-Shima with its volcano. It was August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, the fifteenth anniversary of the vows at Montmartre. Our Lady's Feast, and the birthday of the Society — there could be no more auspicious day for beginning his great undertaking.

CHAPTER XVI

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IT WAS mid-summer, and bright skies beamed upon the land-locked harbour of Kagoshima at the tip of the most southern of all the islands of Japan. Though, as compared with the more refined central provinces, that of Satsuma is as Sparta to Athens,¹ it is nevertheless a district of enchanting beauty.

Francis was yet to see the flowers of the Japanese spring : the little camphor leaves coming out while the air is still cold ; then, late in February, the first of the blossoms, those of the plum-tree, which become in March a cloud of bloom ; these followed in early April by the cherry-blossoms, with a little later the glowing tree-peonies, the azaleas and the rhododendrons. With the first flowers everybody, rich and poor alike, go out to look at the pink and white petals of the plum, and to the branches of the trees poets attach their *hokku*. But though the thrill of them had gone before the summer burned to its close, flowers were in every garden, on the hills in clusters, by the waterfalls, and clothing the feet of the mountains. Wistaria was hanging over the pools

¹ Bellesort, *La société japonaise*, p. 154.

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and the carp-ponds, blue festoons sometimes seven feet long. The fields were full of irises. And it was the month of the flower sacred to Buddha, the lotus, which at dawn uncloses with a sound like a pistol-shot. The thin maple leaves were already here and there tinged with scarlet. The magnolia trees spread their dark glossy green and their large waxen flowers. The chrysanthemums were still to come.

There is not a word of such matters in Francis's letters, though that beauty must have accorded with his serenely happy mood. It was a country worthy of so noble a people. Of all the races among whom he worked, the Japanese were especially dear, his darlings. They were so brave, so honest, so truthful ; the only hard words he ever has to say of them concern their priests. He came expecting to find much to admire, for he knew Paul of the Holy Faith, but here was an enchanted land, of paper houses and of flowers, of gilded swords and untarnished honour, of exquisite politeness and of an art even more exquisite.

How different these people were from the lethargic, softly sensual Tamils, the treacherous Malays, the debased Papuan types encountered in the Moluccas. How glad Francis was that he had come among them. Dainty as they were in all their ways, he perceived that their character was of fine steel, damascened with gold.

Is it fanciful to suppose that Francis did not fail to feel what any man of education and sensitiveness would have felt when suddenly confronted with the charm and chivalry of Japan ? Must his biographer apply only arid

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documentary tests and leave out all that he failed to mention, merely because Francis had no time to record anything that did not directly bear on religion? May one not believe that the first strong impressions of delight remained to the end? Did not the hanging wistaria and the dwarfed trees in the gardens have something to do with Francis's belief that the Japanese were of all the races he had encountered the one most likely to make good Christians? The questions are absurd in logic, but they are pertinent in psychology, and therefore pertinent in history.

Upon arriving in Kagoshima, Francis and his party were housed by Paul of the Holy Faith. Somehow or other the murderer was able to compound terms with the family of the man he had killed, and at once regained his position in respectable society. A peccadillo could be overlooked in the case of one who had become of such great public interest. We find him soon after his arrival writing to the Fathers in Rome announcing that his mother and wife and daughter had become Christians, but that he understood it was not enough to begin to serve God—perseverance had to be to the end.² The phrase is specially pathetic in the view of what Paul's end was.

Other converts were made, the chief among these being a young man baptized under the name of Bernard, and destined to follow Francis during the next two years and

² Delplace, *Sel. Ind. Ep.*, p. 88. The letter is dated November 5, 1549, and is signed "your very loving and very little brother, Paul of the Holy Faith."

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to die as a Jesuit novice at Coimbra. All these converts came from Paul's middle-class circle of acquaintances. The fact that Anjiro had changed his religion was rather a social asset than otherwise ; his house was thronged with visitors who wished to ask questions about fabulous India.

Francis noted with approval that the Japanese were curious about everything. Day by day his opinion of them mounted higher. But he knew as yet nothing of Japan except Kagoshima, and he still had to strike at his objective—the King in his capital.

The first thing, therefore, was to learn the language. Writing on January 29, 1552, to the Society at Rome after he had left Japan, he tells them that the language is not very difficult to learn. This was the opinion of a man who never knew Japanese well. The vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are, indeed, simple enough when compared with some other oriental languages. But the language demands from the European a completely new system of thought. Moreover, as Valignano observes, "The Japanese have certain rules of social elegance which vary with the persons. It is necessary to change the nouns and verbs according to the rank of the speaker ; and men and women have each a different mode."⁸ At every instant, therefore, unintentional equivocations made the preaching of the Jesuits ridiculous or incomprehensible.

For instance, wishing to find a word for God, Francis thought he had hit upon it in "Dainichi." But as this

⁸ Quoted by Brou, vol. II, p. 140.

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term was discovered to mean not a personal deity but a vague First Cause—and one that had a somewhat sinister connotation—it had to be abandoned, and the people who had been told to “pray to Dainichi” were afterwards, to their mingled bewilderment and amusement, told *not* to pray to Dainichi. But the “Deos” that was fallen back upon turned out to be even more unfortunate, for “Dai uso” in Japanese means great lie.

Nevertheless, mindless of the difficulties or, at this stage, unconscious of them, Francis, Torres, and Fernandez grimly set themselves to the task of learning Japanese. Writing on November 11th, less than two months after the arrival of the missionaries, Francis says that they have already begun to understand the language, and have got so far as to be able to give explanations of the Ten Commandments. But there must have been a good deal of hopefulness in the statement, even if we take the “explanations” to have been merely given out parrot-fashion, because in a letter dated six days later, he says that the missionaries are almost as dumb as statues among the crowds around them. “The people talk to us a lot, but because we don’t understand them, we have to be silent. Now we must be like infants in learning the language. God grant that we be like them in simplicity and innocence of mind.”

It is easy to see what the state of affairs was. One day, after they had got through a set-piece fairly well, they would be encouraged by their performance. The next day a difficult question or two would nonplus them,

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and they became disheartened. Francis would seem never to have learned the language in an exact fashion, but to have had a certain fluency and quickness. His vivacity and the expressiveness of his face would have eked out his deficiency in grammar. Fernandez, however, was undoubtedly a linguistic genius. Before long we find him acting as interpreter.

Francis had arrived in Japan with a very definite plan of action : that of going without delay to the capital to see the King. Then he would approach the famous Japanese universities. Backed by the royal favour, and assisted by the converts he expected to secure among the learned, the conversion of the people would be plain sailing.

The trouble was that he knew little about the country, for he had relied on the badly-informed Paul. Such few Portuguese traders as had visited Japan had never gone inland, with the exception of one ship's company that had visited the Mikado in Kyoto in 1543. The haziest ideas therefore prevailed. Francis naturally thought of the Mikado as being like one of the monarchs of sixteenth-century Europe, and of the schools attached to the Buddhist monasteries as institutions similar to those of Paris or Bologna.

There were really no such things as universities in the European sense. The monastery schools taught the Chinese and Japanese scripts, a little liturgy, some law, medicine and astronomy, but had no definite faculty and gave no degrees. The standard of intelligence was, it

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must be admitted, high ; and literacy was fairly general. But learning, as Francis understood the term, hardly existed.

Then, too, the Mikado, though of a line that boasted an unbroken descent and divine origin, had at this time only nominal power. Even the Shogun, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, whose authority had been regarded as superior to that of the Mikado, had temporarily lost control. His office was held, at the time Francis landed, by a boy of fifteen. The actual power was in the hands of the Daimyos ; but their territories varied a great deal in extent, and they were continually at war among themselves. Some of these personages may be said to have roughly corresponded to dukes, others were hardly more than squires. But all of them maintained bands of soldiers—knights and men at arms—known as Samurai.

Many of the larger monasteries also maintained their private armies of mercenaries, a fact which added to the general confusion. The abbots allied themselves with this Daimyo or that, or made independent war with the object of increasing their territorial sway. All this had considerable bearing upon Francis's mission. It seems clear that the Daimyos often felt a lurking hostility to the priesthood, and though the rabble was still under the domination of the "bonzes," the nobility were inclined to view religion with a greater degree of detachment. It was among the Daimyos and Samurai that the Jesuit missionaries found friends and protectors.

Francis's plan of always first approaching the nobles was mainly with the idea of securing their permission to

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make converts among their subjects. Mistaken as he was about many of the political details of Japanese life, he saw at once that he had come among a race superior to any that he had encountered in India or the Spice Islands. Since the accomplishment of reading was common among the people he encountered, he planned very soon after landing to print an exposition of the Christian faith. This would give the Gospel a wide circulation, even in places to which no missionary could go. Though the plan was not then carried out, Francis' fertile mind must be given the credit of having been the first to think of one of the most potent means of missionary activity.

The Jesuits began their work quietly. There would be no use, so Paul assured them, of attempting in Japan the methods that had proved successful in India. The Japanese would merely have laughed if an article of faith had been read to them and if they had been asked to make (crowds at a time) their profession of faith in it. Among illiterate and docile Tamils that was all very well. Baptism could be administered after such a profession, and instruction could follow baptism. But here solid instruction and conviction had to precede baptism; this was not the land of mass-conversions. After a year in Kagoshima the converts numbered a bare hundred.

Soon after their arrival, Paul got a message from Shimatsu, the local Daimyo, asking for a visit. Apparently the Daimyo preferred to see him before sending for Francis.

The visit was a great success. Shimatsu was presented with a painting of the Virgin and Child, and was struck

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(or professed to be struck) with astonishment. This technique of oils was quite unknown to him, so though the picture was probably an atrociously bad one, the young noble and his mother and all his attendants got down on their knees before it. This, which was interpreted by the early biographers as an instance of grace shed in the pagan hearts, and by some Protestants as idolatry, was of course nothing but Japanese good manners.⁴

The same courtesy appeared when the Daimyo's mother asked for a copy of the painting—which naturally could not be supplied—and for a written account of the Christian religion, saying that she would like to study it. In this case courtesy was probably tinged with curiosity.

On Michaelmas Day (September 29th) Francis was summoned to the heavily fortified castle, where he was received with the utmost kindness. Compliments were offered; a strange, nauseous beverage was served in delicate porcelain cups with elaborate ceremony; and gifts were exchanged, Francis presenting the Daimyo with a richly decorated book, probably a Bible or a Missal. A house was assigned for the use of the Jesuits, and they were accorded full permission to baptize any of the people who were willing to accept the new faith.

The motive of all this affability was not so much interest in the Christian religion as a perception that advantage would accrue from the visits of Portuguese ships to Kagoshima, and that the presence of the missionaries there would help to establish it as a regular port of call. Yet though this served to obtain the favour of the civil

⁴ Cf. Brou, vol. II, p. 136.

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authorities, it had disadvantages, for when Francis told the Daimyo that he would like to go on to Kyoto, he was politely discouraged. If Francis left, the ships might select some other harbour, and then the Daimyo would lose not only the trade but the fire-arms he hoped to obtain from the Portuguese.

Shimatsu carefully concealed his real reasons under a show of personal solicitude for Francis. The seas at that time of the year, he pointed out, were stormy, and the roads to the capital were unsafe for travellers. War was raging just then. The visitors had better wait until the spring when he would provide them with a junk.

Francis may have guessed the Daimyo's motives ; he certainly saw that it would not be wise to run the risk of antagonizing a man from whose favour he hoped to profit in his work for souls, so he reluctantly consented to stay. He could presumably have gone in the Chinese boat that had brought him from Malacca, and which was still lying in the harbour. However, this may no longer have been available, or no longer safe to travel by. The Captain had died soon after their arrival at Kagoshima, and his death was regarded by the crew as a punishment for his having disobeyed the oracles. In any event it was not politic to ignore the softly-spoken but decided views of the Daimyo.

It was apparently this Chinese junk, upon which the little band of Christians had spent a day and a night in such grave peril, that carried the letters dated early November 1549. Père Brou,⁵ who is followed in this matter

⁵ Vol. II, p. 161.

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by Mrs. Yeo, believes that a Portuguese ship, which anchored at Hirado at the end of the month, acted as courier. Against this is the fact that a letter was addressed to Peter da Silva, Commandant of Malacca, certifying to the death of the Chinese Captain who had brought them to Japan, and to his having faithfully carried out his contract. Francis would not have forgotten that the man's wife and children were being held as hostages and that their security would depend upon an attestation of faithfulness. To whom would he have been more likely to have entrusted at least this letter than to the crew of the junk in which he had sailed from Malacca ?

The letter to Silva is interesting for another reason. It outlines a plan for promoting trade between Malacca and Kagoshima. Nothing, Francis saw, was better calculated to gain the good will of the local authorities, even if he had some doubts about the advisability of bringing the Portuguese to a country still untroubled by them.

But, after all, the Portuguese would come as traders, not as officials, and so could not behave as they did in India. The risks would be much more than counter-balanced by advantages. He was anxious to do Silva, who had been kind to him, a good turn by putting him in the way of making money. It is, however, a little surprising that Francis suggested that he act for Silva as his agent, and guaranteed a profit of a hundred percent on any investment.

He did not intend, all the same, that the profits of this business should be the sole prerogative of the Commandant of Malacca, for he broached a similar plan to

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Anthony Gomez, who was asked to take up the project with the authorities at Goa.

Let us note Francis's motives. He was only too ready to do something for his friends, but everything had also to serve the good of the missions. Therefore he advised that the ship should bring just enough pepper for the Japanese trade—eighty bags of the commodity is the amount that he estimated as saleable at a good profit at Sakai—because if it brought more there would be a temptation to dilly-dally at Sancian. Such a delay meant the loss of a year, as the ship would have to winter until the monsoon was over. What Francis wanted was to induce Portuguese traders—acting for the authorities at Malacca and Goa—to establish a regular line of communication with Japan in order that recruits for the missions could come to him whenever he sent for them.

On the same day that he wrote to Silva he sent an order to Gaspar Baertz, Balthazar Gago and Diego Carvalhaz to join him as soon as possible in Japan. No doubt practicality is not the most lovable of traits, but since Francis has been so often depicted as a scatter-brained gad-about, kicking up so much dust in his travels that it is difficult to see anything but his heels, it is well that we get this glimpse of him as an astute man of business. He is lovable enough in other respects to be able to suffer no damage at this point.

Silva, in his turn, was entrusted with a little job. He was asked to attend to the comfort of the two converted “bonzes” who were on their way to Goa. Francis had

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hitherto been generally disappointed in the young men whom he hoped to develop as native priests, nevertheless he retained his hopefulness ; perhaps the Japanese would turn out better than the others sent to the college.

The care of the Japanese students was also commended in the long letter to the Fathers at Goa, which is a combination of news about the work in Japan, instructions about the work in India, and spiritual advice. Francis was clearly uneasy about the state of things at the college, the guidance of which he had entrusted with so many misgivings to Gomez. He tells the Rector that Torres ("who is very fond of you") has been asking a number of things for him, which, in the opinion of Francis, would not be advisable for the present. Gomez apparently was very anxious to be summoned to Japan, a country specially suited to his social gifts and his eloquence, qualities which, for some strange reason, Francis did not value at their true worth.

Yet he did not want to hurt the feelings of Gomez, who was being passed over in favour of others, so Francis assures him that greater and nobler projects than he conceives of are being prepared for him. "You may count upon it that within three years you will get letters from me calling you to work at one of the famous universities of this country." That would keep him quiet.

In the general letter to the Fathers at Goa there is a word of warning about the new recruits. It is likely enough that some of them, after leaving Coimbra, will wish themselves back there again when they find out what they have to put up with on the voyage to India.

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Even if their fervour lasts until they reach India they may find it evaporate when they are confronted with the hard realities of the mission field. The same thing may happen to men who are in India, especially those who have grown accustomed to the quiet routine of the college at Goa, should they be ordered to Japan. Their enthusiasm to become hunters of souls might diminish, until they wished themselves back at the college again. Let them know they are coming to a hard life.

Probably with Gomez in mind, Francis advises the Fathers at Goa to use "the common vernacular among the Portuguese." Ciceronian periods might be all very well at the college at Coimbra, and no doubt impressed the gaping Goans, but they were not calculated to move and break hearts. A simple and colloquial style that everybody understood, and matter above nobody's head — these were the things wanted.

Poor Gomez ! We have all met him. He is not really a bad fellow, and rather able, in his way, though not nearly so able as he imagines himself to be. Sleek, suave, self-important ; saying nothing worth hearing, but saying it in fine style ; doing nothing in particular, and giving himself the credit for what other men do ; being always his own complacent, mediocre self. He is usually a great success. In the keen view of Francis he was merely a problem.

These letters had been written in the light of Francis's experience with the Buddhist clergy. As soon as he had got a smattering of Japanese he sought out the Japanese monks. The distinctions between the various sects of

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their religion probably meant little or nothing to him at that time, for he lumped them all together as mere benighted paganism. But he enquired into the mode of life of the houses of monks and nuns that were everywhere, whose externals were in many respects similar to those of Christian religious, and he was not favourably impressed with what he heard.

He soon found out, as *Père Brou* puts it, that a parody of virtue met only a parody of respect.⁶ He passed rapidly from sympathy to impatience. They were only impostors, battenning, like the Brahmins, upon the credulity of the people. Their pretended holiness and austerity cloaked gross immorality, not merely of the ordinary sort but of sins against nature. These sins, Francis says, they make no attempt to deny; on the contrary they defend them, and laugh at any words of reproof. It may be safe to discount some of the stories Francis had been told about the relations between the monks and the nuns—on the general principle that such stories are usually greatly exaggerated—yet from what we know of Japanese sexual morals there is nothing that seems unlikely in what Francis has to say.

He was, however, anxious to unearth a real scholar among the Buddhist monks upon whom he could try his wits. With one of these, *Ninjitsu*, the Abbot of the *Shinshu* monastery, who was probably one of those nobles who had retired from the affairs of the world to the dignity of the cloister, Francis struck up a friendship. The *Shinshu* sect, according to *Père Brou*, pro-

⁶ Vol. II, p. 150.

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fessed a radical Buddhism, atheistic and materialistic. They acknowledged no Creator, and no reward or punishment after death. Nirvana was for them a complete annihilation.⁷ Their prime axiom was *There is nothing*, a convenient way of stifling all remorse of conscience.

Ninjitsu's name, as Francis remarks in his letter of November 11th, means "Heart of Truth," and he adds, "Happy man, if the name really fitted him!" Yet far apart as they were, each of the men had charm and high breeding and was attracted to the other.

One day Francis, seeing a number of the monks sitting in meditation, asked his friend what was the object of their thoughts. The octogenarian cynic smiled through all his wrinkles and answered: "Well, some of them are adding up how much they collected in gifts last month; others are thinking about their food and clothes; others again about how they are going to amuse themselves. Of this you may be sure—not one of them is thinking of anything important."

Possibly Francis smiled in recognition of a clerical type not entirely confined to Buddhism. But he pressed the abbot concerning his own religious beliefs, and found that he had none that were definite. One day the old man would admit that the soul is immortal, and then on the very next day he would incline to the belief that it perishes with the body.

Once Francis asked him which was the best period of life, and got the answer, "Youth, because then a man may do what he wants to do." Francis followed this with

⁷ Cf. vol. II, p. 165.

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another question: "Tell me, which hour does a sailor prefer—that in which he is in mid-ocean, or that in which he is in sight of his haven?" Old Ninjitsu sighed and said, "I understand what it is you wish to say. But it is all nothing to me, for I do not know to what haven my ship is sailing."

Nothing could be done for him, his unbelief being so complete as to leave no ground upon which faith could build. Nevertheless the two men remained friends, and when in 1560 the Jesuit Brother Louis d'Almeida visited Kagoshima, he found Ninjitsu (who must by then have been nearly ninety) still acting as Abbot. The venerable heathen talked with interest and affection about Francis Xavier; but his mind was wandering, and he asked in succession questions concerning matters so disparate as the creation of the world and the weather that might be expected next week. On saying goodbye, he confided to Almeida that he would like to die a Christian, but that his dignity and position forbade it.⁸

Towards the end of November Francis heard that a Portuguese ship was at anchor off Hirado, a small island north-west of Kyushu, the most southerly of all the main members of the Japanese group. Leaving Torres and Fernandez behind, immediately he went off to meet it. There would probably be letters on board, and as likely as not old friends among the officers and men. Moreover, this was a good excuse for surveying the possibilities of Hirado as a field for future work.

The Portuguese received Francis in flamboyant style,

⁸ Cf. Cros, vol. II, p. 79.

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firing cannon and playing music in his honour. All of this greatly impressed the local Daimyo, and accounted in part for the favourable reception he gave the missionary.

Matsura Takanuba, a young man of twenty-five, was more of a pirate than a prince, and as events were to prove, of a cruel and treacherous disposition. Like his more powerful neighbour of Kagoshima, he had an eye open to the advantages of Portuguese trade, and readily granted permission for the making of converts. The tall, tattered, bearded foreign "bonze" was evidently a person of importance in the eyes of the other foreigners, and accordingly was treated with disdainful courtesy.

Again Francis saw one of the Japanese castles, ringed round with so many walls as to seem impregnable. Even here the exquisite taste of the Japanese was evident. After one had passed under the great gateways of strong timber fantastically carved, and thatched with straw, one entered a garden in which dwarfed maples or clipped firs stood in carefully contrived contrast against tall cryptomeria trees; then treading over carpets of soft moss, one leant over the stone bridge and saw in the still, jade-green water carp gliding among the rocks below.

Back in Kagoshima, where he was to remain until the autumn, Francis found Shimatsu growing by degrees colder. The Daimyo probably was resentful and suspicious about the visit to the Portuguese ship at Hirado. Therefore when the Buddhist priests began circulating calumnies concerning the missionaries, he made no effort to contradict them, though he did not believe them. The fantastic charge—as old as the catacombs—made its ap-

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pearance. "Unless ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood . . ." Everybody had heard the Christians say that. Now bloody rags were secretly deposited outside the house where Francis and his friends lived, and were duly found by the inquisitive Japanese and produced as proof of the accusation.

The Daimyo smiled contemptuously at the stories circulated by the bonzes, but when he heard of two more ships stopping at Japanese ports other than his own, he began to doubt whether there was much sense in showing further favour to the Christians. He accordingly ordered that all preaching should cease. Those who were already Christians might continue to practice their religion—as a gentleman he would keep his word—but the thing had gone far enough and it was time to stop it.

Francis had asked several times to be sent to Kyoto: well, this was a good opportunity to give him his wish. Too much trouble was being stirred up by the ridiculous bonzes, and though the Daimyo despised them, he knew their hold over ignorant people. Like all autocrats he was extremely sensitive to public opinion. Let the visitors from the west go to Kyoto. A junk was ready to carry them to the mainland of Honshu.

Only Anjiro, Paul of the Holy Faith, remained behind as catechist of the infant church. And Paul, the admirable, the intelligent, the pious Paul, of all people, failed his trust. His position in Kagoshima was exceedingly difficult; it would seem that in fear of the Buddhist monks, who daily grew more threatening, he ran away.

There is some mystery about his end. According to

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Mendez Pinto he was killed by pirates in the neighbourhood of Liampo. And this seems to accord more or less with the story told by Frois, that Paul became a *bafan*, a river-pirate, and was knocked on the head during one of his forays off the coast of China. It was a curious fate to befall the man who inspired Francis with the idea of converting the Japanese.⁹

Not, however, with Paul but with Gomez in mind had Francis written the previous November to the Fathers at Goa the following appalling warning: "There are many in hell who, after having opened the way to heaven for others, have come to eternal punishment, because of their inflation with a false sense of their own virtue. But there is no one at all in hell who, when afflicted by mortal sufferings, has fortified his soul with humility." This is only an echo of the Apostle Paul's "Lest, after I have preached to others, I become a castaway." It remains an awful possibility, and not one to be dismissed by a few comfortable words to the effect that Francis was a Basque of the sixteenth century. All the same, it is not easy to believe that this fate finally overtook the piratical Paul, or even the pompous Gomez.

⁹ Cf. Brou, vol. II, pp. 174-5; Cros, vol. II, p. 95.

CHAPTER XVII

YAMAGUCHI AND KYOTO

FRANCIS landed in Japan with a misapprehension about the political institutions of the country, but with a correct idea about the character of its people, both derived from Paul and the two other converts. What he had observed in them was confirmed by a wider acquaintance with the Japanese. He noted their extraordinary curiosity about everything, their habit of asking questions, their desire to know ; and he drew the sound conclusion that all this would be of incalculable use to the missionaries working among them. Politeness was another of their admirable characteristics, though he soon found that it was by no means invariably extended towards foreigners. The opinion he expressed in his letter written on November 5, 1549, to the Fathers at Goa—"This is a people to be won by love and reason"—was never changed.

In the same letter he specifies more fully : the Japanese of all heathen races have the greatest amount of natural goodness. They are industrious, honest, kindly, and they place honour above everything else. It was particularly this sense of honour that delighted the Basque *hidalgo*.

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Though the majority of them are poor, he writes, poverty is not held any disgrace. The nobles, however poor they may be, are as much respected as those that are rich, and no noble, however poor, would marry beneath his rank. Everybody carries a sword and dagger, and an insult is never tolerated. Even at night they have weapons within reach.

They are moderate in the matter of food, and their only wine is made from rice. Gambling they detest, and they seldom swear. They are, indeed, addicted to sins against nature—in which respect the priests are worse than the laity—but when they are shown how horrible are these crimes, they are willing to listen to reason. The bonzes, however, try to pass it all off with a jest.

Excelling in archery, they usually fight on foot, though the country is well stocked with horses. Their valour as soldiers is as conspicuous as their loyalty to their lords. "In short," as Francis wrote later to Ignatius (January 29, 1552), "this Japanese nation is the only one which seems to me likely to maintain unshaken the Christian faith if it once embraces it. But this will not be without heroic suffering on the part of the preachers of the Gospel."

How correct a judgment this was subsequent events amply proved. For early in the seventeenth century there broke out in Japan the most furious and persistent persecution that any Christian people has ever been called upon to endure. Large numbers of the native Christians did indeed apostatise; but hundreds suffered martyrdom by crucifixion or burning, and thousands managed to

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preserve their faith secretly. For two hundred and fifty years the native Christians, deprived of priests and of all the sacraments except baptism, held tenaciously on, faithful to the religion preached to them by the Jesuits. When at last persecution was lifted, and they were free to declare themselves, many thousands of souls in places where the authorities supposed they had stamped out the last vestiges of Christianity showed with what iron resolution the Japanese converts had maintained the Faith, passing it on underground from generation to generation.

It was to carry out his carefully-drawn plan for the conversion of this people that Francis, accompanied by Torres and Fernandez, Amador the Tamil, Emmanuel the Chinese, and Bernard the Japanese, set out for Kyoto. There they would interview the Mikado; there they would find the intellectual centre of the country, the great universities about which Francis had so often written with eager anticipation.

They set out on foot for Hirado, the first stage of the journey, where they were to leave Torres. The route they followed went past the fortress of Ichiku, and there they stayed for several happy days.

They left a little Christian community, consisting of the whole household with the exception of the Daimyo, Niuro Ise-no-Kami, and he was at least sympathetic. Francis appointed the major-domo, baptized under the name of Michael, as catechist. He was entrusted with the duty of baptizing any children that should be born, and of leading the prayers. For his use Francis had copies made of the Seven Penitential Psalms, the Passion, and

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the Creed. With his own hand he wrote out the names of Jesus and Mary, which each Christian was to wear in a silk bag around his neck. In all perils they were instructed to invoke those names.

When Michael asked Francis to leave him some remedy for sickness, for in that remote part of the country they were without doctors, he gave them an image of the Blessed Virgin, saying, "This will be the medicine of your souls. When you desire the pardon of your sins, kneel before it and pray to Our Lady to plead for you to her Divine Son." He left also a knotted discipline, which seems to have been used by them not only as an ascetic exercise, but as a curative agency.

Again we find an instance of the sincerity with which the Faith was accepted, even by those who could have been only somewhat summarily instructed. Brother Almeida, visiting the castle in 1560, found Michael still in charge of a fervent Christian group. The Daimyo had not been unbaptized, but it was only for fear of displeasing his over-lord; his wife and children were all Christians. The objects of devotion left by Francis were still in use, but the discipline after nearly ten years' constant employment had to be wielded very gingerly lest it should be worn out completely.

At Hirado the missionaries found a Portuguese ship, from whose crew they received, as before, an enthusiastic welcome. The Daimyo continued to be ostensibly friendly, so Torres was left behind to care for the converts. After a year in Japan no such vast harvest had been reaped as those to which Francis had grown accustomed. But the

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native Christians were of splendid quality. And before long the Jesuits hoped to secure the Mikado's support.

By the end of October, when the fine weather was already changing to cold, they set out for their next point, a monastery of the Buddhist sect to which Nin-jitsu belonged. Probably Francis carried a letter of introduction from him to the Abbot, who received the missionaries courteously and called for refreshments. The monks crowded around, wide-eyed, to stare at the strangers who, so they believed, had come from Siam, the Land of the Gods.

Then a strange thing happened. Francis, instead of eating the fruit set before him, stood up and burst into a harangue about the vices practiced by the monks, and the way they imposed upon the poor by trying to get them to make offerings for the dead—which was no better than swindling them into buying worthless tickets to heaven!

The whole company sat stock-still, frozen with amazement, to think that a man whom they had never seen before, one whom they had received as a guest, should so roundly denounce them to their faces. At last some of them, recovering their presence of mind, fell back upon the bonzes' favourite weapon of ridicule. "Without further formality," says Fernandez, "the Father left them, and we continued our journey." It sounds a little rude on Francis's part, but probably the laconic Fernandez did not tell the whole story. It may well have happened that Francis, just before reaching the monastery, had heard (possibly from the Christians at Ichiku)

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an account of these monks that had made his blood boil. He was always somewhat impulsive.

For five days afterwards, Fernandez tells us, they followed a very rough road. Often the only indication of the path they were to follow were the pine-trees planted on either side of it. The inns were atrocious, with foul food, and fouler bedding. Day by day they trudged on heavily, carrying upon their backs what baggage they had, and living mainly upon the parched rice Bernard had in his wallet.

As if this was not enough, Francis was always adding to his discomfort by means of voluntary mortifications. "Even his way of saying prayers while on the road," Fernandez noticed, "had a mark of penitence." When later the fields were covered with snow he walked absorbed in his contemplation of God, never raising his head, and with his arms folded. Only his feet moved, and they were bare and chilblained. Yet he never seemed to notice his pain, and was surprised when anyone pointed out that his footsteps left blood. It might be remembered that his spare frame had for years been habituated to the intense heat of India.

At the inns, which were more often than not like stables, fatigued as he was from a long day of travel, he ate little. The humility of his aspect, as described by Fernandez, was that of a slave dining with his master and unable to forget how unworthy he is to receive any favours.

Several times they came across a child abandoned by its parents, and left to die. Infanticide was at that

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time as common in Japan as it still is in China. Then they melted a little snow to baptize it before life fled, and buried the wasted body. Another soul for Paradise ! This was the only thing that could rouse Francis from his dream.

They crossed from the island of Kyushu to that of Honshu by the narrow strait of Shimonoseki, but it had to be a dash across to safety, for the waters were infested with pirates. Once they escaped only by hiding in the bottom of the hold of the junk.

Now they were within easy striking distance of Yamaguchi, which was then twice as large as it is today and the most important city in Japan. Ringed round by mountains, it was protected from much of the severity of the weather. Though it was only a stage upon their way, Francis thought they should not miss the opportunity of preaching the Gospel there.

For the first time the missionaries had to suffer positive insult. Crowds of young men and boys followed at their heels jeering them ; and any attempt at preaching was sure to be met with unmannerly interruptions. Evidently not all the Japanese were polite. Perhaps it is that only polished social groups know how to be really offensive. Some of the better classes, however, were impressed by the serene patience of the missionaries and invited the foreign bonzes to their houses. It was mainly curiosity ; nevertheless a few were sincerely interested, and some of these were later converted.

Fernandez, with charming modesty and humour, confessed later that he thought Francis's cool courage at

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these interviews was temerarious. For when anybody patronizingly used the form of address reserved for inferiors, Francis would order Fernandez to reply in the same mode. The trembling Brother hesitatingly obeyed, though quite expecting to see one of the long, gilded swords flash from its scabbard. Afterwards he would shake his head to make quite sure that it was still on his shoulders. It may be that they were excused as foreigners unfamiliar with the nuances of the Japanese language.

Francis was a supreme psychologist. He knew that the Japanese knew he was defying death, and he knew they respected him for it. But he was a Christian psychologist. So he assured Fernandez that there was nothing one needed to mortify so much as the fear of death. "Show these people that you despise it," he would say, "and they will have a good opinion of you." The Japanese, keen judges of character, soon saw that Francis was not a man to be intimidated.

The Daimyo, Ouchi Yoshitaka, eventually sent for them. Unlike most of the great feudal barons of Japan, he did not live in a castle, because he believed that not in fortifications but in his subjects' loyalty lay his surest security—a disastrous miscalculation in his case. He was a liberal patron of the arts, and a *connoisseur* in intellectual novelties. In his palace he gave refuge to the *kuge*, that class of effeminate nobles who were descended from the Imperial family, in contrast with the *buke*, who had won their nobility by the sword.

The scene must be reconstructed not from what Francis

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tells us, which is very little, but from what may be gathered from other sources. There were the series of delicately bare rooms, all of them very cold ; for the nobles, more than others, permitted themselves nothing better than a brazier for fear of spoiling the loveliness of the decorations valued by them much more highly than mere physical comfort.

Every room was a masterpiece : quivering bamboo leaves, impish monkeys, cats, fish and birds ; fine ladies and Samurai in their ceremonial attitudes so sparing of gestures ; waterfalls, snow-capped mountains, reeds ; tigers stalking through feathered grass over which a gorgeous pheasant winged or a butterfly ; peacocks, leopards, wild geese in flight—all of these, with golden backgrounds, clouds of misty gold made from gold dust laid on in minute particles transferred from oiled paper. Gold was everywhere, nothing but gold, tigers gold upon gold, bamboos gold upon gold. There they softly shone upon the *fusumas*, the fragile panels framed in laquered wood or brocade.¹

Upon a dais sat the Daimyo, and behind him was a panel with one enormous twisted tree, its bronze leaves shimmering even against the golden background. Pine cones lay at its foot, and pine needles, etched with an economy as exquisite as its exactitude ; and it all terminated in the massive bole of the pine.

In some such audience-chamber Yoshitaka, the grand Daimyo of Yamaguchi, received the tatterdemalion Christian missionaries. The exalted personage listened po-

¹ Cf. Couperus, pp. 94-5.

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lately to Fernandez reading the account he had prepared of the Creation, the Fall, the Commandments, Conscience, and the Fire of Hell. Francis found that in Japan it was best to stress the moral side of Christianity before proceeding to the dogmatic.

This was followed by a fierce denunciation of sodomy, to which Yoshitaka was notoriously addicted. The practitioners of this vice, so Fernandez read with dry yet quivering lips, were worse than pigs and dogs. The terrified Brother gasped out the insulting terms, in obedience, quite expecting that they would be the last he would utter. Francis sat there imperturbable. When the lecture was all over he calmly asked Yoshitaka for permission to make converts in Yamaguchi. It is hardly to be wondered at that the Daimyo returned no definite answer. He must have been astounded at being so openly rebuked ; he may have been puzzled at the fuss made over things which he regarded as trifles. At all events he was not exactly enchanted by the speech he had just listened to with such impassivity, and therefore refused to commit himself when Francis asked permission to baptize.

There was little to be accomplished at Yamaguchi just then ; as M. Bellesort puts it, Francis had sown on ice.² But in order not to seem to be giving up too soon, he stayed for a couple of months before setting out for the capital.

The way there could not be mistaken, they were told. All that was necessary was to follow the road along the

²Page 273.

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coast-line until they reached Sakai, near the present Osaka. There was no danger of getting lost, because it would be hardly possible to stray inland on account of the mountain ranges.

This sounded easier than it actually was, for there were many roads along the strip of land between the mountains and the sea, and none of them was clearly marked. Often the missionaries had to run after a Samurai on horseback, keeping him in sight as long as possible. It was as well to stay within reach of such people, not merely because they served as unconscious guides but because there was always the danger of highwaymen.

For part of their journey they travelled by a junk on its way up the coast to Sakai, and on this they made friends with a man who gave them a letter of introduction to an acquaintance of his in that town. It is the only act of courtesy recorded about this voyage.

This introduction at first appeared to be useless. They could not find the house of the man they were looking for ; and crowds of ill-conditioned boys ran after the foreigners throwing stones and yelling insults. The Japanese, like all people living in isolation, regarded strangers as monsters. No lodging was to be found, and the weather was wretched—a cold, driving rain. Yet on the hillside to which they retreated, and where they built themselves a little hut, the only cause for disappointment Francis expressed was that he could not preach at Sakai.

A few days later they succeeded in finding the man to whom they were carrying the letter of introduction, and he passed them on to a Diamyo who was about to start

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for the capital. All that His Altitude did for them, however, was amiably to allow them to go with his retinue as servants. They thankfully accepted the slight favour, because without this protection they might not have been able to reach Kyoto, owing to the disturbed state of the intervening country.

Even in times of peace no traveller was safe from the whim of a Samurai who wanted to test the temper of his sword or his skill. That Francis should have arrived at the capital and returned from it in safety is called by André Bellesort the most evident of all his miracles.⁸

As they drew near to their destination Francis's mood changed. He became filled with a wild exultation : they were about to see the Mikado, to cross the portals of the famous universities ; their great plan was about to be put into operation. Wearing a Siamese hat, as Fernandez tells us, Francis almost danced into Kyoto, in the wildest high spirits.

The Japanese, Bernard, adds that he kept throwing an apple high into the air and running forward to catch it. Those in the Daimyo's entourage must have thought him mad — this lanky scarecrow with bleeding feet, laughing and shouting as though he were a boy. Never before or since has a Papal Nuncio entered the capital of a great nation in this way.

As soon as Francis was inside Kyoto his exultation changed to wonder, and from wonder to dismay. Devastation was everywhere ; many fine buildings were falling to pieces from neglect, others were mere sticks of

⁸ Page 274.

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charred wood. Even some of the pagodas had been burnt in the recent sack of the city. The encircling wall, as Francis noted in his letter written from Yamaguchi to Goa in July 1551, was very wide in circumference, indicating that it had once enclosed a vast number of houses—Francis estimated that this must have been a hundred and eighty thousand at its prime. But the number had dwindled to about half, and of those that were still standing many were dilapidated or showed signs of having been battered in the street-fighting.

The depressing appearance of the city was bad enough ; a worse shock was to come. The enormous, sprawling palace of the Mikado, the Son of Heaven, the Lord of the sixty-six kingdoms of Japan, occupied with its adjoining parks and estates almost a quarter of the city. It was a vision of magnificent squalor. Children invaded the enclosure of the royal gardens, or made mud-pies in the rutty road outside. The armed attendants had for the most part deserted, and the concubines of the Emperor Go-Nara wandered in gorgeous, faded kimonos of brocade along the weed-grown avenues, or haggled with pedlars of food at the gaps in the wall.

In the gold-panelled palace apartments there was still some pretence of keeping up the ceremony due a semi-divine royalty. Some of the more pious of his subjects would now and then purchase a bottle of the water in which His Sacred Majesty had bathed, or (at a slightly higher price) one of the texts or musical scores certified to be in the imperial holograph. But the Mikado had become hardly more than a useful fiction. He was tol-

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erated merely because none of the nobles thought his office worth snatching. His person remained safe in the contemptuous reverence with which it was regarded.

With no Shogun capable of imposing order upon a turbulent and greedy horde of Daimyos, the sublime office had degenerated into a make-belief which no longer seriously attempted to be convincing. Within their own domains the barons ruled with an iron hand, except in so far as they were mildly checked by a venal priesthood ; the central government was in a state of complete collapse.

The two Jesuits with their three companions—a Tamil, a Chinese, and a Japanese—ventured down the deserted avenues of tall dark cryptomerias, past pools where cherry-trees stood bare in the wintry wind, and at the gate of the palace were brusquely stopped by a guard. Bernard explained that these were visitors from foreign lands and that they would like to have an interview with the Mikado. The man looked at the forlorn figures and disdained to reply. When pressed for an answer he sneered, “Where are your presents ?”

It is curious that Francis, who had been so amply provided with gifts for just this purpose, had neglected to bring any of them with him to Kyoto. This may have been merely because he did not wish to be burdened ; more likely it was because he had decided that it would be better, after all, to make his appeal in Christian poverty and humility. Whatever the reason, it was a tactical mistake. No admission to the palace could be gained without a handsome present. The Japanese were a proud

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people impressed by dignity, but not at all favourably by beggarly rags.

Francis managed to see the inside of two of the chief monasteries, and they too, showed marks of the civil strife. There was not so much as a sign of any place of learning. The usual crowd of bonzes, idle, dissolute, and cynical, completed his disillusionment.

Even street preaching met with no satisfactory response. A new outbreak of fighting was expected, and the people were in such a state of nervous apprehension as to be in no mood to satisfy their normal curiosity. Stones and filth were flung at the missionaries by mobs of rowdy youths ; no converts were made.

After eleven days of this useless attempt to get a hearing in Kyoto, Francis decided that it had better be given up for the time being. He was now in possession of the hard facts ; he would be able to use them to advantage upon his return. Yamaguchi, though they had had very little success there, seemed to be the stronghold they should first reduce.

Towards the end of February they set off—in a boat this time down the Yodo river—for Sakai. In a voice shaking with emotion Francis intoned the psalm *In exitu Israel* as they saw the devastated mass of Kyoto fade into the evening air. The horrors of a journey overland, though such things did not trouble Francis, were too extreme to be inflicted a second time upon his companions. How the poor Tamil must have suffered ! They had come buoyed up with expectations. Now that

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they had so dismally failed, they would retreat by the easiest and quickest road.

A change of tactics was clearly necessary. The Siamese hat, the apple-catching, the bare feet, and the ragged clothes constituted a serious error, however endearing they may be to contemplate. Better costumes, a less exuberant manner, and valuable gifts—all the means of human prudence would have to replace what Francis would have very much preferred. He had learned an important lesson, and no lesson was ever lost upon him.

He had moreover caught a hint. Several times at Kyoto he had been asked how it was, if the Christian religion was true, that the Chinese knew nothing about it. All their culture had come to the Japanese through Korea from China. The Japanese had for the Chinese the same reverence that we have for the classical past, with this difference: the past that lives for us only in books had for them the force of contemporary fact; where we can be at best heirs, they were students listening to an actual voice.⁴

It was so much a stock argument—this about China—that the active mind of Francis brooded upon it. What if the flank of Japan would have to be turned through China? That he was thinking deeply about it is shown by the letter he wrote to the Fathers at Goa in July 1551. There would have to be a shift in strategy if Japan was to be subdued for Christ.

⁴ Cf. Bellesort, pp. 297-8.

CHAPTER XVIII

LAST MONTHS IN JAPAN

HARD as had been the voyage from Hirado to Kyoto, the return journey, so Fernandez tells us, was still harder. It was made in the depth of the bitter Japanese winter, through whirling winds and snow-drifts. Yet the bitterest thing for the missionaries to bear was the knowledge that they had failed in their objective.

One charming little incident, however, has come down to us. Francis, who loved children so much, had been hurt by the jeering mobs of ill-nurtured Japanese urchins of the lower orders. He now did all he could to placate the little ruffians. At the inns he used to buy dried fruits and similar trifling dainties, and these he gave with his blessing to any children he encountered.

The last part of the journey was made in a junk they picked up at some sea-side village on its way to Hirado. There they arrived at the end of February to find Torres greatly worried about their safety but quietly progressing with his own work.

Hirado was not an important enough place to detain them for long; but so much progress had been made there that its Christian community could not be aban-

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doned. Therefore, leaving Torres to go on with what he had begun, Francis and Fernandez went to make another assault upon Yamaguchi. This time they intended to try new tactics.

One of the reasons why the mobs had insulted them was that they had looked so shabby. Francis decided to appear in garments appropriate to those who carried documents showing they were the Ambassadors of the King of Portugal ; and they would use the presents with which they had been supplied.

Immediately upon arrival at Yamaguchi Francis sent some of them to the Daimyo. A list of these has been preserved ; they were cleverly selected as being the things most likely to appeal to the Japanese. An arquebus would interest a military race ; three crystal vases, a bale of stiff brocade, a Portuguese dress, and a musical instrument with a range of seventy notes, called a manicordia, would appeal either to their artistic instincts or their curiosity. Some mirrors for the Japanese ladies were included, and a pair of spectacles which most amazingly enabled an old man to regain the keen eyesight of his youth. But the thing that excited the greatest pleasure was a chiming clock. With immense satisfaction the Japanese noted that it struck exactly twelve times during the day, and exactly twelve times during the night. The Daimyo was so delighted that he sent in return a large sum of money to his European visitors.

Francis promptly returned the gift. What he wanted was something very different, and he got it : permission to preach and baptize without being molested. Yoshitaka

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did even more: he put a deserted monastery at their disposal, and this served as both church and dwelling for the missionaries. Whatever resentment he may have felt over Francis's former plain-speaking had passed.

The terms of the Daimyo's proclamation are curious. These informed the people of Yamaguchi that the bonzes from the western regions had been granted permission to found a monastery "in order to develop the law of Buddha."¹ The noble was apparently rather vague as to the precise nature of the Christian teaching, or he may have used these terms in an attempt to explain the purpose of the missionaries in a way that would make them comprehensible to the popular mind.

To this monastery, as Francis wrote in his letter dated January 29, 1552, and written from Cochin to the Society at Rome, many of the Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as laymen of the better classes, used to go for the sake of hearing about the new religion. In fact the crowds were so great that sometimes all those who wished to be present could not be accommodated. There was an eager give and take of questions and answers. Francis observed that those who showed themselves at first the most strenuous opponents of the Christian faith were as a rule the ones most likely to be in the end persuaded of its truth. There were no mass conversions. Converts arrived slowly, one by one, but they arrived, and they were of excellent material.²

¹ Cf. E. Satow, "The Church at Yamaguchi from 1550 to 1586," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. VII, part II, p. 148.

² Cf. Bellesort, p. 286.

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Upon conversion the native politeness of the higher grades of the Japanese was transformed to an exquisitely tender kindness. Of this politeness M. Bellesort makes the acute remark that though it had its origin in the ancient Buddhist idea of the renouncement of personality, it nevertheless prepared the road to the Saviour.³

From the converts made from such circles Francis was able to gather a more precise fund of information about the religious tenets of the people than he had so far possessed. He learned, for instance, that there were nine sects among them, some approximating fairly closely to Christianity at special points, others being very far removed. All, however, were drastically unlike Christianity in possessing an esoteric doctrine for initiates, and another version for general consumption.

Upon the basis of this information Francis and Fernandez were able to carry the war into the enemy's territory, attacking the falsity of Buddhism rather than defending the truth of their own religion. Their success in exploding the tenets of the bonzes enormously delighted the converts, and had the effect of making more converts. Yet naturally enough it aroused antagonism among many of those who were publicly put to shame in these debates.

More and more Francis came to see that though piety and good health might perhaps be the main requisites for the mission-fields in India and the Spice Islands, Japan needed men of an intellectual stamp. Neither of the men he had brought with him there, excellent as they

³ Page 297.

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were in many ways, was precisely fitted for this work of disputation. Torres had received only the education of a secular priest, which was not in those times very thorough. And Fernandez, though a man of remarkable parts, had never undergone a theological training.

Suddenly out of the blue sky Francis got the preacher he needed. Fernandez was addressing a rowdy and rough crowd in the street, when a boorish fellow came up to him as though to ask a question. As Fernandez bent down to listen, the man spat in his face. Instead of showing any anger at the outrageous insult, the Brother quietly went on with his sermon—probably the most successful one he ever preached. The jeering mob was dumbfounded and ashamed. From that moment a tide of converts from the lower classes began to flow in.

Among them was one who was a gift from heaven. Afterwards celebrated in the religious history of Japan, and the first native of that country to become a Jesuit,⁴ he struck those who saw him as ugly and odd. Almost totally blind, he earned his living as a clown who was all the funnier for seeming slightly crazed. His uncouth manner was, however, assumed for trade purposes ; actually he had a very agile and acute mind.

Clowning, telling stories, and singing ballads, he groped

⁴ Brou in a footnote (vol. 1, p. 205) answers those critics who have contended that the case of this man shows that the Jesuits were hostile to the establishment of an indigenous clergy. He points out that Lawrence could not have been ordained in Japan, for he died there in 1592 before the arrival of any bishop. He could have been sent, of course, to Goa, but he was too valuable a man to spare. What Père Brou might have urged as a decisive point is that, as a blind man, Lawrence would not have been eligible for ordination.

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his way about, and probably only went to listen to the missionaries because he hoped they would provide him with good "copy." He felt sure he could mimic them and tell amusing anecdotes about them to his future audiences.

Very soon he became interested in the missionaries for a different reason. His quick intelligence, his power of remembering exactly, and of drawing inferences from what he encountered, brought him back day after day with a new set of pertinent questions, which at first the crowd, with whom he was a familiar figure, took to be part of his clowning. Francis and Fernandez from the start perceived how keen was the logic under the fantasticality. Yet it was not solely a matter of logic; he was touched by the love and kindness so evident in Francis and Fernandez, the shining of the grace of God in them, and was amazed that they had come so great a distance through so many dangers to preach their religion. Before long he was asking for baptism.

Then he began to use his gifts in the service of Christ. Nobody knew better than he how to manage a Japanese crowd, and he was not less successful with the priests and the nobility, for wit and mother-wit to a great extent compensated for his lack of formal education. Thousands were converted by his preaching, and Kyoto, where Francis himself had failed, was first opened to the Gospel by Lawrence, the blind ballad-singer.

The summer burned away in splendour in the gardens and on the encircling hills of Yamaguchi with their forests of maples, oaks and chestnuts. In mid-July came the

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Feast of Lanterns, the Japanese All Souls' Day when, with candles alight, and with offerings of food and *sake*, the spirits of the dead are welcomed home again. This had been the most fruitful period of the work in Japan.

At the end of six months at Yamaguchi Francis had gathered a Christian community of five hundred souls. He had determined, however, that at the first opportunity he would return to India, where he wanted to find new recruits for the missions. Then, too, there was need for him to see with his own eyes how matters were progressing at the college at Goa and on the Fishery Coast. But most of all was the new idea always stirring at the back of his mind—that of China. When he heard that a Portuguese vessel was in the harbor of Hiji, on the north-west shore of Kyushu in the province of Bungo, he immediately decided to leave. Cosmo de Torres was summoned to Yamaguchi from Hirado to work with Fernandez. "These are your guardians," Francis told his Japanese converts; "but remember to put your trust in God." Then the whole five hundred knelt down and Francis prayed for them all. When he held Torres and Fernandez in a farewell embrace the tears were streaming down his face. He was saying goodbye to his darlings, the Japanese Christians.

On September 1st he had sent a letter to the ship's company asking the names of those on board. The reply made him beam with pleasure, for it told him that the vessel was under the command of his old friend Edward da Gama. The messenger bore letters of still greater importance—two of them from Ignatius, one,

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which had so fortunately failed to arrive in time in India, summoning him back to Europe for consultation, the other, rescinding the order in view of the obvious need of Francis in the Orient, containing his appointment as Provincial for the whole of the districts east of the Cape of Good Hope.

From India the news was disquieting. Gomez was more and more plainly showing himself to be an unsuitable Rector for the college at Goa. It was imperative that Francis should sail at the earliest possible moment. Another Portuguese ship might not arrive for another year. Francis lost no time in hesitation ; he would sail with Gama.

Carrying his own baggage, partly because they contained the sacred vessels used at Mass, but partly out of humility,⁵ he arrived at Hiji about the middle of September. There the Portuguese gave him an almost royal welcome. They decorated the ship with all its flags when they saw him coming. Their long-boats rowed out to meet him, trumpets blowing. Four times all sixty-three pieces of their artillery were discharged, much to the edification of the Japanese.

Edward da Gama had already made an engagement for Francis. Yoshishige, of the Ohotomo clan, the Daimyo of Bungo, wished to hear him expound the doctrine of Christ. Francis agreed to go to Funai, the capital of the province, the following day.

He recalled how impressed the people of Hirado had been by the respect shown him by the crews of the two

⁵ Cf. Cros, vol. II, p. 154.

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Portuguese ships that had anchored there, of how some degree of dignity and state had proved more effectual in the work of Yamaguchi than the poverty which was so much more to his taste. It probably never occurred to him that it had a humorous aspect, for he had been brought up on rigidly ceremonious etiquette, and took it for granted that men of the world behaved everywhere in the same fashion. If this sort of thing was what the Japanese liked he would give it to them — this time in full measure.

Mendez Pinto has left an amusing account of what happened.⁶ The Portuguese set out in the shallop of the ship and two pinnaces, with silken banners streaming in the wind and with alternate fanfares of hautboys and trumpets. All of which of course brought out an immense crowd to the landing-place.

The Daimyo had sent a litter for Francis, but he declined to ride in it. He had, however, dressed himself handsomely for the great occasion in a new cassock, a surplice and a stole of green velvet. Behind him walked the ship's officers as though they were his servants. Instead of Francis carrying his own baggage, as he had done on his journey from Yamaguchi, the officers were the porters of the gifts to be presented to the Daimyo. These included a book bound in white satin (a copy of the translation of the Catechism into Japanese), a pair of black velvet slippers, a gold-headed cane, a parasol, and a picture of the Blessed Virgin wrapped in violet damask.

At the entrance to the castle they were greeted with an

⁶ French translation of 1628, pp. 1084-9.

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exhibition of military exercises. Then the attendants led them into the reception hall. Here a child of six made a polite bow and delivered in his sing-song voice a flowery speech of welcome. After Francis had chatted playfully with the youngster, he was led into another large room where he was greeted by the nobles who put their heads to the ground three times by way of salutation.

There was still a long way to go before they reached the audience-chamber: first a gallery bordered with orange trees, then a hall where the Daimyo's brother received them, but at last, after passing through what seemed an endless series of rooms, they came into the Presence. As a supreme honour Yoshishige the Daimyo, a young man of twenty, refused to allow Francis to kneel to him; he insisted instead upon putting his own head three times to the ground. It was obvious that he was prepared in advance to consent to anything that was asked of him. There was no difficulty in getting his permission to make converts.

Francis immediately began to preach in the city, and conversions occurred almost daily. This work took up so much of his time that Edward da Gama complained one day with gruff good-humour, "The only time your friends get any chance to see you is late at night or early in the morning because of these heathen rascals." But these heathen rascals, as the Captain knew, were the people Francis was after.

His success was so great that the local bonzes took alarm, and proposed to counteract the influence of the Christian Father by staging a religious debate. When

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the Daimyo heard that they proposed to enter the celebrated saint and scholar Fucaradono in the lists as their champion, he was somewhat alarmed ; the foreign bonze would be overwhelmed by such an adversary. He thought Francis very foolhardy to accept the challenge.

The Buddhist champion turned out to be a great fraud. He began, according to Mendez Pinto, by asking Francis whether he remembered him. Francis answered, "No, I have never seen you before." The monk then delivered what he intended to be his knockout blow. "You say you don't remember me ? What about that bale of silk I sold you at Frenojama fifteen hundred years ago ?" Francis must have felt inclined to laugh ; instead he asked gravely, "How old are you ?" The bonze answered, "Fifty-two." "Well, then, how is what you say possible ? Besides, though you can remember something that happened fifteen hundred years ago, you have forgotten that according to the doctrine you preach Japan was uninhabited until six hundred years ago."⁷

The public humiliation of their champion filled the bonzes with sullen rage. They retreated to their monasteries, and put the city of Funai under what was virtually an interdict. They refused to offer sacrifices and—as a heroic measure of indicating their anger—even declined alms. This, they allowed it to be known, would continue as long as the nobles encouraged the new preachers.

The Daimyo became somewhat alarmed — and for good

⁷ This is Mendez Pinto's version (pp. 1099-1100), and there is obviously something mixed up or forgotten. But there is no doubt about the substantial correctness of his report of the visit.

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reason. Only a week after Francis left Yamaguchi, news had come of an insurrection there on September 27th or 28th which apparently had been instigated by the bonzes.⁸ A certain Takafusa had risen against Yoshitaka, and the Daimyo, believing his cause lost, had shut himself up in his palace, to which he set fire just before killing his wife and son and committing *hara-kiri*.⁹ The rebellious vassal, however, had not dared to proclaim himself Daimyo, but, as a convenient way out of the trouble, retired to a monastery and allowed Haruhide, the brother of Yoshishige, to take the barony of Yamaguchi.

During the rebellion the Christian missionaries went into hiding, but under the protection of Haruhide appeared to be safe for the time being. Electricity, however, was still in the air ; a similar outbreak might occur at Bungo. In that event it was by no means certain that the Daimyo could be trusted.

There is reason to suspect that in what happened at Yamaguchi Yoshishige played a somewhat devious part. André Bellesort suggests that even if the rebellion was not backed by him, he was privy to it, as he certainly derived some profit from it. According to the Japanese chroniclers he had obtained his own throne by assassinating his father and half-brother.¹⁰

The Portuguese thought it no more than prudent to withdraw for safety to their ship, and tried to induce Francis to go with them. They found him in a poor

⁸ Cf. Cros, *Vie et Lettres*, vol. II, p. 157.

⁹ The elaborate code of *hara-kiri* (belly-cutting) is set out in detail in Appendix A. to Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*.

¹⁰ Cf. Bellesort, pp. 300, 306.

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hovel instructing and heartening his converts. Despite Gama's urgent pleading, he refused to leave, saying, "There's no danger of a man so unworthy of it as myself receiving the crown of martyrdom." The Portuguese were so moved by these words that to their eternal credit they decided not to seek shelter on their ship, but to take whatever fate awaited them on shore.

The storm of fanaticism subsided. The bonzes discovered that the Daimyo was determined to protect Francis and therefore dared not risk any act of violence. The learned humbug Fucaradono began to explain that his dialectical defeat was merely a fluke. His opponent had given a tricky answer but had not met the real issue. He accordingly asked for another debate.

This, according to Mendez Pinto, lasted for five days, and in the course of it all sorts of questions were thrashed out. The Buddhist champion arrived with an escort of three thousand monks—presumably to see fair play; but the Portuguese played a still better card. They came dressed in their most gorgeous clothes and with chains of gold around their necks. Whenever Francis spoke to them, they knelt before him cap in hand, as though he was a king; and the Japanese noticed that these caps were decorated with pearls.

All except a few of the monks were excluded from the debates, which were conducted according to rules laid down in advance and before a court of referees. Again Francis triumphed.

Many of the questions brought up were exceedingly trivial, passing all too easily from subtlety to puerility;

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others raised what are still real problems. The subject-matter was not confined very strictly to religion, but embraced science and philosophy. Francis created a tremendous sensation by demonstrating that the world is round, and though his astronomical system was of course Ptolemaic, it was acknowledged to be far superior to that of the Japanese. With the utmost deftness he used his scientific proofs to prepare the minds of his audience for his exposition of theology.

All this was considered excellent sport by the young Daimyo who, like many of his class, had a low opinion of the Buddhist priesthood. Whenever there was any danger of the debates coming to an end, he would suggest a new topic for discussion. It was to him as good as a cock-fight. Indeed, he did urge on the disputants in the terms of hawking, telling them one day that he had discovered two new birds for them to fly at. When the bonzes got angry at some of the answers given by Francis, the young baron would order them to listen to reason. The nobles present enjoyed it hugely when he once said sternly to the monks, "Stop howling like dogs !"

Flimsy as were many of their objections, it must be admitted that the bonzes at times touched upon serious difficulties. The divine foreknowledge, for instance : how was it, if God knew when creating Lucifer that he would fall, that He did not in His mercy prevent this vast evil ? How was it that God had allowed so long an interval between the Fall and the Incarnation ? How was it that God would condemn their forefathers, who had died without knowledge of the Christian faith, to remain forever in

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hell ? This last was their greatest scruple, because of their veneration for their ancestors. Francis gave him the Christian answers to these questions, but he admitted that the tears came into his eyes when he saw their grief over the doctrine of hell.

Even theological debates must come to an end. It was high time for the ship to sail for Malacca. The bonzes by now thought rather better of Francis than they had at first, and probably he thought rather better of them. It was evident that some among them did turn their minds to the contemplation of divine things.

Francis expected to be back in Japan within two or three years. One of the reasons why he was leaving was to gather recruits in India. He took with him two Christians of the Samurai class, Bernard and Matthew, who were to be trained to be missionaries among their own people, as well as two ambassadors from Bungo.¹¹

As he stood upon the deck of the ship, and watched the islands of the beautiful Inland Sea come into sight and fade into the distance one by one, his mind must have gone over the total results of his work in Japan. At the end of two and a half years he had comparatively little to show — probably less than a thousand converts, certainly not more than fifteen hundred. He was not satisfied with the rate of progress. His first plan of campaign having failed, he had drawn up a new one. That having not been wholly successful, he saw the necessity of striking from another quarter. He would have to convert the Chinese first. China was the key position.

¹¹ Cf. Cros, *Vie et Lettres*, vol. II, pp. 168-72, 173.

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When it had been taken, there would be no difficulty in reducing Japan.

Already, as Francis tells Ignatius in his letter of January 29, 1552,¹² he had begun to study the Chinese script in readiness for his journey. Such was his sublime trust in God that he quite expected to succeed. And what he was undertaking must be understood to have included the conquest of the whole of the Orient for Christ. Francis confidently thought that this could be brought about during his own lifetime. He was only forty-five, turned white-haired indeed in Japan, but nevertheless hale, and still in his prime. Another twenty years of active work was what he might reasonably look forward to. They should be sufficient even for the vast project his now consecrated ambition set before him. And well they might have been, had he lived. But before 1552 was out he was in his grave on the island of Sancian.

¹² *Mon. Xav.*, vol. 1, p. 674.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ADMINISTRATOR

LATE in October, while the ship was off the coast of China, there occurred one of the many miracles recorded of Francis. There can be no doubt about the fact itself (unless we except the addition of bi-location made by Mendez Pinto),¹ for it was amply attested to by many who were present. All the same it must be admitted that what happened is susceptible of another explanation than that of the miraculous.

During a storm a boat was lowered, attached by two cables to the ship, presumably for the men in it to cut away some fallen sails or cordage. Suddenly the cables broke, and, when the Captain attempted to rescue the men, his ship lay across the waves and was almost swamped. Edward da Gama therefore was reluctantly obliged to order that she be put back to her course.

Francis, however, insisted that sail be shortened, because he was certain that the boat would return safely—as it did, much to the astonishment of everybody who had given it up for lost.

It is likely enough that as a result of his many sea-

¹ Cf. pp. 1122-5.

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voyages, during which it had always been his practice to help with the work, he had become as skilful a seaman as any on board. He prayed for the lost boat, and its recovery was rightly taken as due to his intercession ; but he did not fail to keep a clear head or to use his wits to the best advantage. The homely adage was for at least once in point : God helps those who help themselves.

Some time towards the middle of November the ship reached the harbour of Sancian. It was a centre for the Portuguese trade with China—indeed, it was at this time the only one, for no Europeans were allowed to disembark on the mainland.

Who should be there but an old friend of Francis's, Diego Pereira, a rich merchant of Malacca, with his ship the *Santa Croce*. It seemed a fortunate encounter, for it enabled Francis to leave without delay on the second stage of his journey to India, the ship that had brought him from Japan being obliged to wait at Sancian for repairs. Moreover, da Gama's plans called for wintering in a Siamese port.

Perhaps the meeting was not nearly so fortunate as Francis at the time supposed it to be. For upon the journey with Pereira he conceived what was on the face of it an excellent plan, and yet one that was doomed to end in frustration. It was this : since China was closed to visits from the Portuguese, the only means of gaining admittance would be to have an ambassador appointed to the Emperor from the King of Portugal. Francis was determined to go to China in any event, but he much preferred a workable scheme to a desperate expedient. It

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occurred to him that Pereira would do very well as Ambassador.

André Bellesort gives a brilliant picture of the old adventurer and the apostle outdoing each other in fantastic dreams, like those of romantic adolescence.² This is part of his thesis that Francis was addicted to chimerical fancies and illusions, a thesis the soundness of which has been questioned in these pages.

There was, of course, no time to consult the King of Portugal ; the appointment would have to come from the Governor at Goa. The Governor, moreover, would probably be unwilling to undertake anything that involved heavy expense. That difficulty could now be easily surmounted, for Pereira was persuaded to make himself responsible for the cost of the embassy on the ground that he might reasonably expect to make large commercial profits out of his contact with China. In this investment he was prepared to risk no less a sum than thirty thousand *cruzados*. Francis felt quite sure that he could induce the authorities at Goa to give their consent and to furnish the necessary documents. It was characteristic of him to be ready to use an instrument of this sort, if no other was available.

He was undoubtedly of a sanguine temperament, and it is possible that he overestimated the profits likely to be made by Pereira. But it should be remembered that he was talking to a hard-headed business man, who had been trading for years in those waters and who must have been well informed as to the commercial possibilities of

² Page 313.

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establishing a privileged line of communication with China. Though unforeseen difficulties arose later that were well-nigh to ruin Pereira and to prevent Francis from gaining an entrance into China, it was not the fault of the scheme itself. Despite M. Bellesort, it seems to have been an eminently feasible one. The subsequent obstacles came from the opposition encountered at Malacca on the part of a minor official, after approval had been given to the embassy by the Governor at Goa. Knowing nothing of what was to eventuate, Francis and his friend, excited by the prospect of gain—the one of souls, the other of gold—made as rapidly as possible for Malacca.

But calculations of this sort are never quite safe. There is always danger of a mistake occurring in what seems an insignificant detail, which nevertheless can ruin the whole project. When the idea of the embassy was broached to the Commandant-elect at Malacca, Alvaro d'Ataide, the brother of Peter da Silva, he thought it an excellent one. The mistake that was made was in Francis's not taking him into his confidence and telling him that Pereira was to be proposed for Ambassador. Ataide had only just received the information that he was to be the new Commandant, and was still very full of his own importance. He seems to have resented the fact that he was not consulted. There is also a suggestion made by some of the old biographers that he would have liked the appointment himself, both for the sake of the honour and the prospect of profit.

It may well have been, too, that Pereira feared that

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Ataide might object to the appointment of a merchant like himself of no great social rank. Perhaps there was also a personal animosity between the two men. If this was the case, it would account for Francis's saying nothing about whom it was he intended to propose as Ambassador to China. Pereira had presumably asked him to keep it a secret until the matter was finally settled. At any rate nothing was said. As so often happens, diplomacy proved to be extremely undiplomatic.

The importance with which Francis invested the matter is shown by the haste he made to get to India. A short stay at Singapore for water sufficed. At Malacca Francis remained only two days before taking ship in the *Gallega* for Cochin. The journey from Japan to India was made in the incredibly short space of three months. On January 24, 1552, Francis put foot again, after nearly a three years' absence, upon Indian soil.

At Cochin Francis made the acquaintance of Alfonso de Noroñha, the newly appointed Governor, to whom he introduced the emissaries of the Daimyo of Bungo, and with whom he took up the project of the embassy to China. Francis was now able to speak with the knowledge derived from his experiences in Japan, and to assure Noroñha that a display of grandeur and the giving of a few handsome presents would work wonders. This would put the Portuguese authorities to practically no expense, because Pereira had offered to finance the scheme himself. Yet it would open up a new avenue of trade for Portugal. It all sounded very plausible, and the fact that the Goan authorities would not be obliged to commit

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themselves very deeply was a further point in its favour. Noroñha gave his sanction.

This, however, seems not to have been immediately given, for there is no allusion to it—despite references to Francis's intention of going to China that year—in his letters to Ignatius and Simon Rodriguez. One would expect an intimation that the thing had been proposed, and was under consideration; that nothing of the sort occurs suggests that Francis was too cautious to put anything in writing—at times when letters were often intercepted—until the necessary documents had been signed. Noroñha, as a new official, no doubt felt it incumbent upon his dignity not to assent too readily to any request.

The letters from Cochin during January have, nevertheless, a high interest because of the news they contain about the work in Japan. Francis writes that recruits are wanted there, recruits of a special type. They should first of all be men of tried virtue, but they should also be learned men. He is kind but frank in explaining that neither of the men left at Yamaguchi, or any of those available in India, seems to be fitted to be sent to the Japanese "universities." (It is curious that he was still thinking in terms of university life. Possibly, however, this was the only way of making Ignatius and Simon understand what type of man was wanted.) They must be prepared to match themselves against the whole glory of a proud people, and especially the reputation of the bonzes. They should be well skilled in dialectics, gifted with the kind of popular eloquence which will be able to follow error in its devious windings, and even to anticipate

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the argumentative tricks of opponents, so as to explode the sophistries with which they are sure to be confronted.

It would also be desirable, as Francis writes to Ignatius in a later letter (that of April 9th), that the men sent should have some knowledge of natural science—especially astronomy. He had found at Bungo the extraordinary interest he had excited by means of his own (probably limited) acquaintance with such matters. “The explanation of these things goes far towards gaining the good-will of the Japanese.”

Further—and still more important than the need for astronomers—was the need for men of great bodily strength. The work, Francis warns, is going to be very heavy. There will be little time for meditation or recollection. Even Mass will be hardly possible, at least during the first few days, on account of the pressure of crowds of curious visitors. “One of the faults of the Japanese is the way they shamelessly take up the time of foreigners, whom they are only too likely to treat with contempt, making game of them.” Leisure will barely be left for the taking of food or sleep.

Then there is the intense cold to be considered. For this reason Belgians or Germans, if they know Portuguese or Spanish, would do very well. But the men who are sent out should be neither old nor too young; middle-aged men would be best. If young men are chosen great care should be exercised, for they will be subject to all kinds of temptation.

With regard to the Chinese project, Francis tells Ignatius that he has already had a statement of Christian doc-

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trine prepared in Chinese characters. He explains that the Chinese and Japanese are able to read one another's scripts without difficulty, because in each literature the characters are pictures. It is only when they try to talk to one another that the two races cannot make themselves understood. Again the conviction is expressed that by going to China Francis will be able to strike at the root of the problem of converting Japan : "As soon as the Japanese learn that the Chinese have accepted the faith of Christ, there is every reason to believe that the confidence they place in their own religion will be lessened."

For the work in India two specially equipped men are badly needed, and these Francis asks Ignatius to pick for him. One is a Rector for the college at Goa, "a man formed by your own hands." Such a man Francis begs him in the name of God to send : "If I were in your presence I would implore you on my knees." The other need is for a man to act as Spiritual Director of the missionaries. "No words can express," writes Francis, "all that I owe to the Japanese, for by their means God has flooded me by an interior light which enables me to see those countless sins, that abyss of miseries concealed in my conscience. Now that the eyes of my soul have been opened, so that I can see and almost feel by sensible impression my needs, I know how much I require another person to supervise me — I and all the other Fathers and Brothers of the Society here."

Immediately upon this follows one of the affectionate outbursts so characteristic of him : "In your holy charity you say how much you long to see me again before the

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close of this life. Our Lord alone knows what keen emotions that arouses in my heart. Whenever I turn your words over in my mind (which is very often) tears brim my eyes as I think of what joy it would be to clasp you again in my arms."

The letter written on the following day to Rodriguez is a briefer version of the one to Ignatius. With it Francis sent a petition to the King regarding the cruel conduct of the Commandant at Tuticorin.⁸ The Governor had already given orders that these acts of oppression should cease, but his orders were of course being ignored, so that the native Christians felt they had no redress except in the King. It is the old story of the rapacity of the Portuguese minor officials. Therefore Francis enclosed a letter to John III, asking him to send out Rodriguez invested with civil jurisdiction over the native Christians, for this is the only way of protecting them from exploitation. But the tone of Francis' letter would indicate that he wrote without much hope of what he suggests being done.

By the middle of March Francis arrived in Goa to make a thorough house-cleaning preparatory to his setting out for China. We have seen with what reluctance he had appointed the smug Anthony Gomez Rector of the college, and how all the reports that had come to him during his stay in Japan had only increased his anxiety. He was now determined to deal with the matter once and for all.

Previously Francis's hands had been to some extent tied.

⁸ This petition is included in Léon Pagès' *Lettres de Saint François Xavier*, vol. II, pp. 523-5.

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Gomez had arrived in India bearing his appointment from Rodriguez who, as Portuguese Provincial, had the technical right to make it. Now that the whole of the Orient had been erected into a new province of the Society of Jesus, Francis was completely free to act at his own discretion.

There had been constant trouble at the college. Gomez claimed by virtue of his commission from Rodriguez to be Vice-Provincial, and had constantly interfered with Camerino. As Rector he had shown himself overbearing ; and from the wretched students was exacted—under severe penalties—the kind of conduct that might have been expected from religious novices, but which it was altogether too much to expect from native boys who were only recent converts from paganism.

The result was what might have been looked for : one night a number of the boys chopped down the trees in the compound, climbed the walls, and ran away. In a towering rage Gomez expelled the entire student body, and announced that in future none except Portuguese would be accepted. This of course was to change completely the purpose for which the college had been founded, something which he had no authority to do, since the institution did not belong to the Society but was only under its jurisdiction.

Furthermore, he had acted in high-handed fashion over a church which belonged to the Confraternity of Mercy. This had merely been lent to the Jesuits, and when the Confraternity asked to have it back Gomez not only refused but induced the Governor (in whose favour he

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stood) to throw the officers of the Misericordia into jail.

Francis rectified matters by asking public pardon of the Confraternity, with the result that generosity provoked generosity. What had been demanded as a right was willingly given as soon as it was surrendered. The church was made over to the Society.

These were some of the pressing matters that had to be attended to by the new Provincial. But Francis' first act upon arriving at the college was to visit a Brother who was sick and thought to be dying. From that moment, as Teixeira (then a rosy novice at Goa) records, the Brother began to regain his health.

It is from Teixeira, too, that we have what is perhaps the best description of the personal appearance of Francis. He was tall, with a good-looking, ruddy face, a high forehead, dark eyes, and black hair and beard, which, however, had now become white.⁴ The corpse preserved at Goa shows that Francis had the small V-shaped head of the Basque type.⁵

⁴ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. II, p. 882.

⁵ This detail comes from Père Lhande's *Inde Sacrée* where (pp. 257-8) a full account of the present appearance of the body may be found. It might be as well to add here that when Francis was buried at Sancian two sacks of quicklime were poured into the grave in order that the flesh might be dissolved so as to leave the bones bare for subsequent removal. Some months later when the body was disinterred it was found perfectly fresh and with the blood still in it. Taken to Malacca, it remained buried there for eighteen months, when it was exhumed again and carried to Goa.

The body has shrunk a good deal, but all the features except the nose are perfectly preserved. The face has the look of terra-cotta or wood but still retains an expression of indescribable vivacity. Francis's right hand was amputated and sent to Rome, and a lady named Doña Isabel de Carom, according to Fonseca (p. 297) in 1554 bit off a toe which she wished to preserve as a relic.

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The clothes of the famous missionary were noticed to be shabby but very clean. And Francis had a tendency, as he walked, of lifting his *loba* a little. This would suggest fastidiousness ; he did not want to let his gown trail in the dirt. It also suggested a fire burning in his breast.

What was specially noticeable was the way he gazed into the sky, as though there was the Fatherland to which he was to go—that and an expression of happiness so radiant that it made everybody else happy. Anyone who was depressed in spirits had only to look at him to be instantly relieved.

The state of his health, however, was disturbing. Francis had described himself as robust, but such was not what others thought of him. One of the Fathers at Goa, writing to Rome on December 1, 1552 (when, though the writer did not know it, Francis was dying at Sancian), says that for him to eat at all had become a torment, so troubled was he with a stomach complaint. Though he humorously grumbled that his fellow-Jesuits were trying to make things too easy for him by special dispensation, the dispensation was only of eggs sprinkled with sugar—which sounds like a sufficiently nauseous dish. Yet though worn out, he used to preach five or six times a day, and was indefatigable in hearing confessions, attending to the affairs of the community and the spiritual good of the people at large.⁶ All this was, no doubt, very imprudent. If only Francis had taken reasonable care of himself he would undoubtedly have lived much longer.

⁶ Cf. Cros, vol. II, p. 206 ; *Doc. Nouv.*, p. 443.

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Instead he burned himself out in ten years. But that is the way of such men ; and we have to take our Xaviers as we find them and be thankful.

Delighted as were most of the Jesuits to have their great man among them again, if only for a little while, there were some to whom his visit was hardly a cause for rejoicing. Gomez was removed from the rectorship to which he should never have been appointed, and assigned to the post at Diu. As we shall hear no more about him, his inglorious career had better be rounded off at this point. Indignant at the slight, he wrote a letter of protest to Ignatius, who replied by telling him to return to Europe for the investigation of his complaints. On the way home in 1555 the ship in which he was travelling was lost with all hands. He was lucky at not being actually expelled from the Society, for Francis, upon leaving for China, had left in the care of Baertz a document containing Gomez's dismissal in the event of insubordination. With him there passed a fairly able but an infinitely arrogant man, the perfect specimen of the pompous nonentity in office.

Yet one cannot take final farewell of him without instancing his lack of judgment in the matter of the Rajah of Tanor. This gentleman had once tried to persuade Diogo de Borba to baptize him secretly ; but when Borba (a shrewd man who knew India) saw through the Rajah, Gomez was approached, and fell into the trap. He always had a weakness for exalted personages. Gomez proposed a visit to Goa. But the people of Tanor rose and kept their Rajah confined to his palace. He man-

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aged to get out, however, by using his turban as a rope to let himself down from one of the upper-storey windows, and sailed away in a waiting boat.

At Goa he was received by Gomez with trumpets and the ringing of church bells. His conversion was announced from the pulpit (presumably by Gomez), and the Portuguese put on a bull-fight in celebration of the event. Upon returning to Tanor he at once returned to the worship of his heathen gods.⁷

While all this fooling of Gomez had been going on, Francis was in Japan. But he heard all about it on his return to India, if not before, and all that he heard convinced him more than ever that Gomez made the worst possible superior for the Jesuits in India.

There was still, however, a difficulty about who should succeed him. Rodriguez had recently sent out from Portugal a group of twelve men, one of whom, Melchior Nuñez Barreto, he had appointed Rector. Now that Francis had become Provincial that appointment was invalid. He therefore sent for Nuñez and asked him, "What are your qualifications?" Without a moment's hesitation Nuñez answered, "Three years of philosophy and six of theology." Francis smiled, but shook his head: "It would have been better if you had three years of theology and six years of experience." Nuñez was accordingly sent to Bassein to get it, and three years later was the first man to preach in China after the re-opening of the Empire to Europeans.

It was Gaspar Baertz, whom Francis had summoned

⁷ Cf. Brou, vol. II, pp. 265-6; Bellesort, 314.

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from Ormuz, where he had done brilliant work, and who had been intended for Japan, who was eventually made Rector of the College with jurisdiction over all the other Jesuits in India. This was no more than a reversion to Francis's original plan of 1549.

Several novices were dismissed as unsuitable candidates for the Society, and along with them Emmanuel Morales and Francis Gonzales. These two priests had returned from the Moluccas without permission, and such an act of insubordination could not be tolerated. They were assigned to the Bishop of Goa to work under him as seculars. Their defection was in strong contrast with that of Nuñez Ribero, who had been martyred in the Island of the Moors — proving that the threat of poison was not without foundation — on the same day that Francis had landed in Japan : August 15, 1549.

A young lay-brother, Andrew Carvalhez, was sent home on account of his health, but with a high recommendation of his gifts and grace. Rodriguez was asked to receive him kindly, for though the lad was unfitted for the Indian climate, much might be hoped from him in Portugal. It was a graceful way of getting rid of him.

In addition to those who had to be dismissed, there were those who needed reproof. Francis found that some of the Jesuits under him were disposed to claim special privileges which made them unpopular with the secular priests and the members of other religious orders. One of these cases was that of Alfonso Cipriano who was stationed at Mylapore. He was well liked by the garrison, who looked upon him as a saint, but he managed to get

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at loggerheads with the Vicar-General there. Francis wrote to the fiery old Spaniard telling him plainly that he should not attempt to justify his quarrelsome disposition on the score of zeal. Much better a little (and here Francis drew an inch-long line upon the paper) obtained through patience and humility than much (and here he drew a line right across the page) gained in any other way. (This illustration he used in several letters.) "You are not to suppose," he writes, "that your mere membership in the Society of Jesus gives you a hereditary right to special consideration, before you have gained it by your humility." He must therefore go to the Vicar-General, and ask his pardon. Furthermore Alfonso is to kiss his hand, "and if you wish to please me you will kiss his feet." The letter is to be shown to the Vicar-General, and the act of humility is to be performed every week.

The letter had been dictated to a secretary. Francis added a postscript in his own handwriting: "O Cipriano! if you knew with what love I write to you, your tears would flow at thinking of the tender charity with which I take you to my heart. If you could only see my secret thoughts, you would know how deeply your name is graven upon my soul!" And he signs himself, as Ignatius had signed the letter which had so touched him: "Yours wholly, so that I shall never forget you, Francis."

A very similar letter was sent to Gonzalvo Rodriguez who had replaced Baertz at Ormuz. He too must be humble and obedient to the Vicar-General. The warning is added to one who seems to have belonged to the faction of Gomez: "Remember how much more neces-

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sary the Society is to you than you are to the Society."

The other superiors of the missions were appointed or confirmed—Anthony Eredia at Cochin, Nicholas Lanciotti at Cochin, Henry Enriquez on the Fishery Coast. To these—as to Gonzalvo Rodriguez, Melchior Nuñez and Paul Camerino—there is no doubt that written instructions were sent. But the only one of these letters which has been preserved is that addressed to Eredia. There is, however, perhaps no great loss, for those that remain are all along the same lines : injunctions to be humble and obedient.

The letter to Eredia (who was to work among the Portuguese) quotes the words of St. Gregory : "Humility begets love, pride hatred," and goes on to give directions about the confessional. Special care is to be taken that those who have lived in a state of enmity, or with ill-gotten gains upon their conscience, or entangled in sinful attachments should not only abandon their sins but make whatever restitution is necessary before absolution is given. Experience in the Orient had shown that mere promises of amendment could not be relied on.

The most important of Francis's letter of this period are those addressed to Gaspar Baertz, the newly appointed Rector of Goa, who would have to act as Vice-Provincial during Francis's absence. To a great extent the letters to him are filled with advice about administrative details ; at the same time spiritual matters are far from being neglected.

The first thing, in Francis's opinion, to be looked for in a superior was not that he should be an eloquent preacher

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(or Gomez would have done well enough) or a good man of business, but that he should be a man of God. Since the success that Baertz had achieved in Ormuz, Francis seems to have detected in him a tendency to vain-glory, the besetting sin of the orator, and perhaps still more of those who are no better than glib talkers. He therefore reminds Baertz, "Never forget that many preachers are in hell. Among them are many who were more gifted than you are and who gained more fruit than you have done. Most terrible of all to think of—the very instruments of sending others to heaven are themselves among the lost!"⁸ Francis therefore exhorts him to practice humility, "Because, my dear Gaspar, I hear something of the applause of your sermons, and fear that one who pleases others so much may begin to be not very displeased with himself."

Business matters are gone into. Baertz is to be sure and pay off the debts of the college (contracted by Gomez, with his love of display), and all building operations (begun on an ostentatious scale by Gomez) are to be stopped until this is done. "In general see that you take infinitely less care of the edifices built of stone and mortar than of the spiritual temples of God."

Even the question of the laundry-work receives attention. Perhaps it would be cheaper to buy two slaves for the washing, Francis suggests, than to send the clothes out. Moreover, as he had noticed from his examination of the accounts that a good deal of money was being spent on the gardener and his two negro assistants, he

⁸ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. I, p. 911 *et seq.*

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makes the suggestion that a lay-brother be assigned to the garden, and two slaves bought to work under his directions.

Francis had discovered, too, that certain debts due to the college had not been collected for some time. Leniency about such matters, he tells Baertz, is mistaken kindness. It ought to rest heavily upon the consciences of those who have laxly permitted it. "I would be very uneasy if I had to render an account to God, as they will have to do, of this foolish indulgence. How necessary it is that that temporal means should not be neglected when they are for the glory of God."

Perhaps such passages may give a slight shock to those sentimental persons who like to think of the saints as altogether detached from practical affairs. It is much more agreeable for such people to picture them among the flowers and the birds—or at any rate in a religious ecstasy—than poring over a ledger, or checking washing bills. Yet an altogether false impression of Francis Xavier would be given if this aspect of him should be omitted. Nothing was too small for his careful scrutiny if in any way it bore upon the work of the missions.

Francis orders Baertz never on any pretext to allow himself or any of the Jesuits subject to him to become entangled in worldly affairs, by which he does not mean business matters, but the cultivation of official society. If Francis himself did this very thing on occasion, he was well aware of its dangers, and it must be confessed that though his spirit was utterly uncontaminated by it, there

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will always be some question as to whether the results achieved by this method were worth the risk that was run.

With regard to the college, Baertz is reminded that he is well aware of the former conditions, which are to be avoided in future. The intention of the founders, who built the college with the King's money, must be carefully observed: the place is for the education of native boys.

One long letter (that dated April 15th) is mainly occupied with a subject as delicate as it was thorny—the relations of the Jesuits with women, and their being consulted about domestic disputes. Francis knew only too well by experience that all kinds of problems would be certain to arise in this connexion. In what follows it should be borne in mind that the social conditions in Goa, during the sixteenth century, were very different from those of present-day London or New York. The Portuguese settlers were very generally loose in their morals, and, when they had wives, these were, more often than not, natives or Eurasians. We must also remember that Portuguese etiquette, with regard to the relation between the sexes, is still much more rigid than our own. With all these deductions made, there still remains a good deal of value to us in Francis's instructions to Baertz.

No Jesuit should talk with a woman, of whatever age or rank, except in a public place, such as a church. If dangerous illness necessitates a visit at home, the husband or a relative ought to be present at the interview. If the woman has no relatives, other witnesses must be brought

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in. Even with all these precautions, such visits should be made only under extreme necessity.

If a quarrel occurs between husband and wife, and a Jesuit is called upon to make peace between them, it is more important that he listen patiently to the husband than to the wife. The first thing to do with the man is to induce him to make a general confession, for if he can only be led to yield himself to God's service, it will be easy enough to persuade him to be reconciled with his wife.

On the other hand, if a woman should come with complaints against her husband, saying that being obliged to live with him is an impediment to her Christian life, and that she feels she is entitled to a legal separation, whatever her arguments may be—and in such cases they are often very clever—no approval is to be given to the idea of a separation. What is above all else to be avoided is that the husband should have any reason to suspect that the priest is on his wife's side. Whatever his fault may be, the blame must not come from the priest ; but the man should be skilfully led on to blame himself. "Everywhere," writes Francis, "men need to be handled with kid-gloves—nowhere so much so as in India. But to gentleness they will always bend. You will gain everything here by prayer and kindness, nothing at all by threats or severity. I repeat this advice again and again. If you are taken as arbitrator, never under any circumstances blame the man in the presence of others, however sure you are that he is the one at fault, because the passionate minds of women will seize upon your words, and

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use them as an opportunity for humiliating their husbands, and of concocting complaints without end to pour into the ears of those imprudent priests who have formerly encouraged them."

All the same, the priest must be equally careful not to offend the wife by giving her reason to think he is showing unjust partiality to the husband. He must not seem to believe in any accusation brought against the woman, but keep an even balance, condemning no one unheard, and taking into consideration the defence. "The truth is that, in disputes of this kind, as a rule both parties are at fault, though one perhaps a little more than the other. The best way is to reprove both gently, accepting what each has to say in self-defence." In any case, the task of the mediator is going to be very difficult, for he is liable to incur the animosity of both the man and the woman unless he shows great prudence. "Try and keep the friendship of both, and to send them away at least at peace with yourself."

One more curious piece of business had to be attended to. We find Francis writing on April 9, 1552, to Simon Rodriguez urging him to ask King John to write to the Emperor Charles V advising against any attempt to send Spanish ships from the New World to Japan. He was evidently apprehensive lest the *Conquistadores*, having subdued Mexico and Peru, might conceive the idea of making an attempt upon a country which technically perhaps could be considered as falling within the Spanish jurisdiction, according to the division of the New World made by Pope Alexander VI. They ought to be warned,

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wrote Francis, that the Japanese are an exceedingly war-like race, who would almost certainly massacre the invaders to a man. There was no use to try and repeat the exploits performed in America, and there were no treasures to plunder.

In this, we may surmise, Francis was thinking less of the interests of Spain (though of these he was not unmindful) than those of Japan. Some writers have supposed that Francis was using his influence merely in favour of the commercial profit of the Portuguese Crown.⁹ It was rather that he wished to avoid having the Japanese molested. He saw clearly that the spread of the Gospel in their country was not at all likely to be furthered if there was any clash between the kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula.

At the conclusion of this busy month of letter-writing—to which there must have been added a still greater amount of personal consultations at the college, the gist of which has been preserved in several instances (notably that of Baertz) in voluminous memoranda—everything was ready for the journey to Malacca. There Pereira was to be met, and the party would go on in the *Santa Croce* to China.

Francis was to be accompanied by the priest, Balthazar Gago (who was sent on, however, at the last minute to Japan), Alvaro Fereira, a lay-brother whom he later expelled for cowardice, Anthony, a Chinese youth who was to act as interpreter, and Christopher, a Tamil servant. Two Brothers, Peter de Alcazova and Edward de Silva,

⁹ Cf. Bellesort, pp. 307-8.

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destined for Japan, were to go with them as far as Malacca.

The boat was due to sail on Maundy Thursday. On the morning of that day Francis said Mass in the college chapel and gave Communion to the students and to the crowds of Goans who had come to see their last of him. The great hymn of Aquinas, the *Pange Lingua*, was sung as Francis carried the consecrated Host in procession to the Altar of Repose. Probably he went round with basin and towel to wash the feet, in imitation of Christ, of twelve beggars brought in from the streets of the city.

The effect of his farewell words has been recorded for us by Louis Frois. They fell from his lips with so much power and grace that all hearts were inflamed, and everyone present felt himself a new man. After the last exhortation, with tears in his eyes and as though he wished to embrace each person present, he told them to be constant to their vocation, profoundly humble (since from humility proceeds self-knowledge) and, above all, prompt in obedience.¹⁰

Francis was now ready to depart. That, however, was not to be just yet. The ship lay becalmed in the harbour waiting for a favouring wind; it was not until Easter Sunday that the sails at last caught the breeze. Every one of Francis's main enterprises seem to have begun upon an especially auspicious day. None of them was more glorious than this of the delayed day of sailing, the Feast of the Resurrection. It was on Easter Sunday four years previously that he had sailed for Japan.

¹⁰ Cf. Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, p. 436; *Vie et Lettres*, vol. II, p. 288.

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Yet there were still administrative details for him to attend to. Upon putting in at Cochin he heard that Lancilotti and his infant college were destitute of funds. From the Comorin coast came news that a priest had been held captive by the Badages and, though rescued by his converts, had died on March 4th. Two other priests were therefore despatched to carry on his work.

Baertz, as Vice-Provincial, was instructed to see to the matter of getting money for the relief of Lancilotti. Eredia was also in need of funds for urgent necessities. Another priest was to be sent at the first opportunity to Japan. When Baertz writes he is to give an account of everything, not omitting the smallest detail.

An interesting postscript is added. Francis says that he has borrowed Eredia's Greek-Latin lexicon, because of his going to China; why it was needed there is not quite clear.¹¹ But he remembers having seen two other copies—one in the possession of Francis Lopez, the other with Emmanuel Morales. One of these should be sent to Eredia. It is evident that Francis, though so often absent, had the most minute knowledge of the men under him. He took in at a glance even what books they had.

At the end of April, probably the 25th—for the letter to Baertz is dated the preceding day—the sails were spread, and the ship steered towards the tip of India on its way to Malacca. Francis was never to see India again, though his body now lies there incorrupt.

¹¹ Cf. Thibaut, vol. iv, p. 11. Was Francis Xavier taking a Greek-Latin lexicon to China because he thought he might need it as a model for a Chinese-Japanese dictionary? Apparently so; then note his casual and sublime audacity.

CHAPTER XX

THE ATTEMPT ON CHINA

FRANCIS had written to Ignatius on January 29, 1552, about his plans for going to China. In reply Ignatius expressed his consolation at knowing that such a door had been opened to the Gospel, but said that in his opinion Francis should send somebody else and himself remain in India.¹

Polanco, Ignatius's secretary, added a note to the effect that the Fathers of Spain, Portugal and Italy believed that the return of Francis to Europe would have great results, the meaning of which, says Père Cros, was that the Society thrilled at the thought that it might have Francis for its second General.² By the time that Ignatius and Polanco were writing, Francis Xavier had been seven months dead.

As the ship went down the coast of India during the Easter Week of 1552, and Francis looked his last upon the promontory of Comorin and the shores of Ceylon, his heart must have been full of eager anticipation of the work he was about to undertake, the greatest of all his

¹ Cros, *Doc. Nouv.*, pp. 449-51.

² *Vie et Lettres*, vol. II, pp. 373-4.

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adventures, the decisive blow at the paganism of the East.

The prospects of success were bright. Francis was to enter China in the train of the duly accredited Ambassador of the King of Portugal. He was going to a highly civilized country which was at peace and which was ruled with unchallenged power by its Emperor. All that had to be done was to arrive in fitting state, to show Pereira's credentials and his own, to present the rich gifts from the Portuguese King which had been bought out of the funds Pereira had shrewdly put up as a commercial investment, and to receive the imperial sanction to make converts. There could be little doubt that such permission would be granted. What would happen at Peking would be what had already happened, on a much smaller scale, at Yamaguchi and Bungo.

Francis did not doubt that, under favourable auspices, he would be able in a short space of time to convert a large part of the Chinese nation. For he intended to summon to China most of the Jesuits already working in the Orient as soon as he had won the support of the Emperor ; and he was counting upon suitable recruits being sent to him from Europe as soon as he was able to report the boundless opportunities open to the Faith. The universities were to be fired with missionary enthusiasm. The sons of Dominic and Francis could of course be counted upon.

Xavier had provided himself with an interpreter in Anthony, who had now been eight years studying at Goa. For immediate use he took the exposition of Christian doctrine in Chinese characters which had been prepared

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for him in Japan. If he had intended to use there the printing-press for the propagation of the Gospel, we may be sure that it was his intention to use the same instrument in China. Though he had never undertaken so vast a task, he had never undertaken one in which success seemed more assured.

This was to be the centre from which he would extend his conquests. The Japanese had always made a capital objection to Christianity that the Chinese were ignorant of it. That objection was not only to be removed, but the prestige which the Faith was to acquire in China should overwhelm all opposition to it in Japan. No Alexander or Jenghis Khan or Napoleon ever conceived greater triumphs for their arms than Francis conceived for the Cross of Christ. He was only forty-six, and so might well expect to see the Kingdom come in his own lifetime. Yet in all this there was no personal ambition. It would be enough if he could open the door ; all the rest would follow according to plan.

There was nothing visionary about his scheme, for though Francis was indeed a man of vision he was also eminently practical. If any mistake was made, it was over an incalculable detail, a personal antipathy that happened to exist between two men. The plan of campaign in itself was perfect.

Nevertheless Francis, even before leaving India, had forebodings of failure. Though he knew that he had done all that lay within the province of human prudence, he several times said, "The Devil will ruin everything !" And the Devil did.

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Yet, as Francis would have been the first to admit, the Devil can do nothing except in so far as God permits it. Put more specifically, if Francis failed to enter China it was because this was not in accordance with the will of God. Perhaps Heaven wished to prove that the most carefully-laid plans are nothing to a wisdom that remains inscrutable. Perhaps it was to exhibit once again the triumph of the Cross in failure that Francis was to die deserted at the very door of China. Beyond our comprehension though it must be, an all-wise Providence ruled that the thing aimed at should be missed by a hair's breadth, that the Faith should be barred from China just at the moment when her conversion seemed possible, just before the moment after which her conversion (humanly speaking) seems impossible.

At Malacca, where he arrived at the end of May after an uneventful voyage, there were at first no indications that barriers were about to be raised. The plague was raging, so Francis threw himself with characteristic ardour into the work he most loved, that of performing the most menial offices for the sick, and of preparing their souls for death.

Among the afflicted was the Commandant-elect, Alvaro d'Ataide, whom Francis nursed tenderly, saying Mass for him every day in his room. It was Francis, too, who had brought him his appointment as "Captain-General of the Sea," which he had secured for him by way of compliment from the Governor at Goa. Precisely this appointment gave Ataide power to ruin Francis's own plans.

Though designated Commandant of Malacca in succes-

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sion to his brother Peter da Silva, who had recently resigned, Ataide had not yet entered into his office which, for the time being, was exercised by the stop-gap, Francis Alvarez. But as prospective Commandant, and now actual Admiral, the real authority was already in his hands.

Armed with that authority, he forbade Francis and Pereira to sail on their embassy to the Emperor of China. Other officers, including his own brother, remonstrated with him. Alvarez was even ready to send a body of soldiers to take back the rudder of the *Santa Croce* which Ataide had hung up over his official residence. The crew of the ship were spoiling for a fight, and would have fought had not Francis refused to allow blood to be shed. Ataide was resolute in his determination to prevent the embassy.

His motives will always remain obscure. It has already been suggested that his arrest in Mozambique in February 1542 by Sousa may have aroused in him so bitter a hatred for Francis that he could cherish it for ten years in secret. But this, though a possible, does not seem to be an entirely satisfactory explanation — because it could have been only by a devious process of association that he could have supposed that Francis had any connexion with the matter. Besides, his arrest, though annoying at the time, was, after all, a trifling mishap. In spite of it he stood high in the Portuguese service. It may be, however, that he imagined that if it had not occurred he would have stood still higher.

More likely is the explanation offered by Mendez Pinto : that the Admiral was jealous of Pereira. When the docu-

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ment of appointment was exhibited, he professed to believe that some other Diego Pereira — one in Portugal — was meant ; the King would never have given the embassy to a man who had begun life, as everybody knew, as a valet to Gonzales Coutinho ! The honour should have been conferred upon himself, and with the honour the opportunity of turning it to profit through trade.

Another story is that Ataide had once tried to borrow a thousand ducats from Pereira, and was now taking his chance of paying back the snub given him by the ex-valet. Probably it was a complex of motives, that included resentment against Francis for not having told him — the Commandant-elect ! — whom it was he meant to propose for the post. Whatever his motives, Ataide was obdurate in his opposition.

He would of course have been well within his rights to have made representations to the Governor at Goa that Pereira was not a man qualified for the appointment, had he really thought so, and to have waited further instructions. He was completely in the wrong in acting as he did.⁸

Only one course was open to Francis, and he took it, though with reluctance. He sent the Vicar-General to the Governor to warn him of the consequences of interfering with a Papal Nuncio. As this was the first time

⁸ Whiteway (p. 76) thinks Ataide did not do more than claim his just rights. On the same page, however, he says that there had been ill-feeling previously between Ataide and Francis. I confess to feeling some doubts about this ill-feeling ; but if it existed, one can hardly think it confirms Ataide's official rectitude.

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the Vicar had ever heard of Francis holding such an office, he may have been a little incredulous. The sole person to whom the information had been imparted was the Bishop of Goa. Now that the time had come to use these powers, the Papal brief which conferred them was not to hand. It had been left in India, for Francis had never supposed it would be necessary to carry the document around with him.

When it could not be produced, Ataide pressed home his advantage and roundly accused Francis of bluffing. He did not hesitate to use the term forger, and for good measure he added—if all the stories are to be believed—the accusations against him of drunkard, seducer, and hypocrite. The man simply gave way to one of those ungovernable rages from which members of most Northern races are happily exempt. According to some accounts he even trampled on the document that was produced, the one commissioning Pereira.

This conduct *ipso facto* involved excommunication, but the Vicar-General (who had to live at Malacca under Ataide's rule) hesitated about promulgating the sentence in the absence of documentary evidence. The Admiral accordingly had the chance to brazen the matter out under a show of compromise. Pereira was not to be allowed to go to China; he was altogether an unsuitable man to act as Ambassador. But Francis, if he chose to do so, might go on alone. In view of the fact that China was absolutely closed to all foreigners, this seemed an ingenious way out of the difficulty. Ataide was not op-

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posing the Papal Nuncio but only a fellow who was posing as the King's Ambassador. He knew very well that Francis could not get into China without Pereira.

The fickle inhabitants of Malacca now either turned against Francis or were afraid to show themselves his friends. Those who wished to curry favour with a Commandant whose term of office was just beginning (and they remembered that it would last for three years) in several instances publicly insulted the very man they had so recently professed to revere. The Papal Nuncio was hooted on the streets as an impostor.

Francis was, however, quite as determined as Ataide. With or without the embassy he would go to China. And he would show the Admiral that he could not with impunity resist the Holy See. Yet he did not strike at once. His letters from Malacca make no mention of excommunication, because there was a likelihood that the mails would be tampered with by Ataide. They contain no more than instructions to Baertz over minor matters. One of these is a request that a debt to Silva be paid by the Society.

In a letter to Pereira dated June 25th, Francis assumes all the blame for the fiasco ; it was solely due to his own sins. Unable to face the man who had invested so heavily, he took refuge on board the *Santa Croce*, and begged Pereira not to try to see him there. He promised, as the best that he could do, to take the matter up with the King, confident that the royal treasury would make good the matter of the expense.

Early in June Gago, who was to have accompanied

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Francis to China, was sent on to Japan instead with the two lay brothers. It would seem from this that Francis, though still firmly set upon attempting to enter China, believed he now had little chance of succeeding, and therefore decided not to waste another missionary upon what was likely to be a fruitless enterprise. With Gago there went the two Samurai who had been sent by the Daimyo of Bungo as emissaries to Goa.

A month after their departure Beira arrived from the Moluccas with news that must have gladdened Francis's heavily burdened heart. The Mohammedan power in the islands appeared at last to have been broken, and thousands of Christians who had been forced to apostatise had returned to the Church. It was the one ray of light in the darkness.

A week or so later the *Santa Croce* was ready and Francis sailed. At the last moment the Vicar-General attempted to effect a reconciliation between Francis and Ataide. The reply was, "I have no bitterness against him, but the only place I shall see him again is in the Valley of Jehoshaphat."⁴ As he went down to embark, after praying a moment for the Commandant, he took off his shoes, in accordance with the instructions of Christ to those of His disciples who had been rejected, and shook the dust of Malacca from his feet. Those who came to see him off stood silent in dismay. Then the Vicar-General spoke a faltering word, "Is this parting forever?" "That is as God wills," said Francis, and

⁴ Cf. Joel, III, 12. This was a way of saying that he would next see Ataide at the Day of Judgement.

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clambered into the boat that was to take him to the *Santa Croce*.

Four or five days later the ship came to anchor in the harbour of Singapore, and Francis immediately sat down to write a series of letters. One was to the Japanese convert at Goa named John. He wished to return to his own country, and Francis promised to try and collect for him a sum of money to set him up as a merchant. Another letter was to Pereira, enclosed with which were letters to the Governor at Goa and to the King. These Pereira is to read before sealing them and sending them on. Francis offers the suggestion that it would be as well if the debarred Ambassador himself wrote to the King explaining the commercial advantages to be derived from entering into diplomatic relations with the Emperor of China. Anything that could be done to recoup Pereira for his losses must be done. The matter lay like lead on the conscience of Francis.

Beira, who presumably had confided to Francis at their meeting in Malacca some extraordinary spiritual experiences that had come to him, is strictly enjoined to keep these things secret. And a letter to Baertz asks him to send gold to Japan : let it be the very finest gold procurable, because the Japanese want nothing but the best for the chasing of the weapons of which they are so proud.

The most important of this batch of letters, however, concerns the case of Alvaro d'Ataide, and is dated July 20, 1552. Baertz is instructed to see to it that the Bishop of Goa sends to the Vicar-General of Malacca the formula of excommunication. It is to be understood, says Fran-

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cis, that this is not a question of asking for the excommunication of the man, for he is already excommunicated. But it is necessary that the fact be promulgated for two reasons : to bring Ataide to seek pardon for his sin, and to deter anybody from committing the same offence in the future.

It began to appear, as the *Santa Croce* crept up the Chinese coast, that Francis would lose both his Portuguese companion, Ferreira, and Anthony, the Chinese youth he was counting on to be his interpreter. They were struck down together with fever. It was, therefore, with immense relief that Sancian was sighted.⁵ In the fresh air of the island the two men had a good chance to recover. They were now right at the gate of China.

The problem still had to be solved as to how Francis was to cross the threshold, now that he had been deprived of Pereira. No Portuguese ships were allowed to go closer to the mainland than this, and even at Sancian they were tolerated rather than accepted. It was understood that they might put in to exchange their goods with those of the Chinese merchants, but upon their departure every vestige of their visit had to be destroyed. Not even

⁵ This is the name by which it is now generally known. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th ed.) map it appears as *Chang-chwen*. The early English cartographers mistook this for *Saint Jean* and so called it *St. John*. According to Père Brou (vol. II, p. 339 fn.) the Chinese name is *San-tchao* (the three isles), or *Chang-tch'oan* (above the arm of the sea). In a letter to me the present custodian of the shrine, the Reverend Robert J. Cairns, M.M., says the Chinese name is *Sheung-chuen* (upper island, or upper stream), or *Saam-Chow* (three small islands together). The Portuguese called the island *Sanchoã*, which is how it appears in Francis's letters. In view of all this, perhaps the best (certainly the easiest) thing to do is to stick to *Sancian*.

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the ramshackle huts they ran up were allowed to remain standing. Most of the Portuguese lived aboard their ships so as to be ready for flight in the event of the mandarins of Canton causing trouble. It was all a bootleg trade.

The penalty inflicted upon those who were so temerarious as to have landed at Canton was vividly described by a man named Emmanuel de Chaves who had succeeded in escaping to Sancian. The Chinese did not spare even those who had been driven ashore by storms.⁶ They were thrown into the dark, damp corridors of the prison, chained to the walls, and lay with heavy weights pressing upon them at night. They were frequently beaten, and always were half-starved, and the stench and filth were indescribable.⁷ Yet Francis, knowing all this, calmly prepared to make his prohibited entry. In fact, what he heard about the Portuguese prisoners stiffened his purpose ; he might be instrumental in getting them set free.

What he proposed doing was perhaps not quite so rash as it may seem to be at first glance. He knew very well, as he said when writing to Pereira from Sancian, that if he was caught in China he might be put to death by torture. But he hoped to be able to impress the Chinese officials with his credentials and be taken before the Emperor. As he saw it, the chances were equally divided between Peking and prison ; therefore the risk was worth running. As a genius he counted upon his star ; as a saint he counted upon God.

⁶ Cf. Cros, vol. II, p. 342.

⁷ Cf. Brou, vol. II, pp. 340-1.

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Had he backed out of it then, he would have been discredited in the eyes of the Portuguese. Ataide, in chorus with all those officials in India who were secretly resentful, would have jeered. But to throw himself into the hands of God, and go forward with nothing but naked trust, would be an inspiration to those who were to come after him. The one thing that Francis was always afraid of was the fear of fear. The greatest of all dangers was that of losing confidence in God.

Now new unforeseen difficulties arose. Anthony Fereira, the lay-brother, was so shaken by the prospect of death by torture or life in a Chinese jail that he withdrew. Francis promptly dismissed him from the Society ; it had no place for cowards. However, as a Portuguese officer of the same name was martyred in Sumatra in 1565 it may be that the frightened lay-brother redeemed himself in the end.

Worse than this defection, the Chinese interpreter was discovered to have forgotten his mother-tongue to all intents and purposes, and therefore was useless for the work he had been brought to do. A Portuguese named Lopez was dug up who could talk Chinese after a fashion ; but he, too, when the time came, found his courage fail him. They were all brave enough so long as it seemed a physical impossibility to get to the Chinese coast ; when at last a means of conveyance was thought to have been found, Francis was deserted.

Since his arrival he had worked quietly among the Portuguese and Chinese traders on the island. Mass was

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said there for the first time on September 4th, the Feast of St. Anacleto, Pope and Martyr, and sinners were reconciled to God.

Miracles also occurred, among them one as charming as that which transformed Nicholas of Bari into Santa Claus. Francis was afraid that a dowerless girl he discovered living on the island among so many men would be forced into a life of prostitution unless she could find herself a husband among them. As every Portuguese man expected a dowry, Francis decided that he had better provide one. Accordingly he asked a friend of his named Peter Velho to give him three hundred ducats. The worthy merchant was playing chess at the time, and did not want to be disturbed. "This is a bad day to ask me for money, just when I'm trying to get hold of some." Francis smiled and said, "All times are good for doing good, Peter." "Oh, well," Velho good-humoredly answered, "I must get rid of you. See, here is the key to my desk ; go and help yourself." When he looked over his money-bags afterwards he found them untouched. Meeting Francis later in the day, he exclaimed, "Why, you never took anything !" Francis now beamed upon him. "If that is so, it shows that the Lord Himself has provided ; but you may be sure that he has accepted your offering as made to Him. I promise you this : that though you will meet times when you are in danger of poverty, you will always find friends to come to your help. And you will know in advance the hour of your death ; it will be when the wine in your mouth tastes sour."

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This delightful story was attested to at the Process of Cochin in 1616 by the son-in-law and the daughters of Peter Velho.⁸ The preposterous embellishment unfortunately is added that, when the promised sign occurred, Velho invited all his friends to his funeral. Then stretching himself upon the catafalque, and being covered with the pall, a requiem Mass was sung for his soul. When the last absolution had been given by the celebrant, they found Peter Velho dead. It need hardly be said that no requiem Mass could be sung in such circumstances.

After several months of waiting, during which time the Portuguese at Sancian had repeatedly tried to dissuade Francis from attempting to land in China, at last the owner of a Chinese junk agreed to take Francis to the mainland for a fee of two hundred *crusados*-worth of pepper—perhaps the highest ferry fare on record.

The landing had to be arranged with the utmost circumspection. All that was asked was that he should put Francis on shore secretly, and then leave him to fend for himself. But the Chinese trader was afraid to undertake anything so dangerous at any price, and it is clear from the last letters that Francis was far from feeling confident that the man would carry out his part of the bargain. Moreover, as Francis wrote on October 22nd to Perez, there was no certainty whether, after the fee had been paid, the Chinese would not maroon him or throw him overboard. That risk, however, had to be accepted along with all the others.

So determined was Francis to enter China that his fer-

⁸ *Mon. Xav.*, vol. II, pp. 474, 475.

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tile brain conceived an alternative plan in the event of the Chinese trader failing him. It was that of going to Siam. He had been told that every year an embassy was sent from there to Peking. Perhaps he would be able to persuade the Siamese Ambassador to take him as a member of his *entourage*.

This, however, was only an alternative. It could not be counted upon, and, even if successful, it would involve a year's delay. Francis was incapable of enduring inaction at any time, still less now that he knew (as he probably did) that his death was near. Therefore, if the trader came according to his promise on November 19th, the appointed day, he was firmly resolved upon making an entrance to China then.

While waiting he wrote, during October and November, his last letters. These were to be taken by the Portuguese merchants who, after failing to deter Francis from his purpose, had asked him to defer his attempt until they were safely out of the way. They were terribly afraid that the mandarins would take reprisals against them if he was caught.

It should be noted how careful Francis was not to put anybody to inconvenience. The date of November 19th had been fixed upon because by then the trading season would be over and the Portuguese ships would be leaving. It might, however, also be noted that this was the precise moment when the authorities at Canton would least expect any "foreign devil" to attempt to land.

As the last ships left—one of them with Fereira as a passenger—Francis wrote letters for them to carry.

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Again there is encouragement offered Pereira that his losses will be restored and that he will eventually go to China as the Portuguese Ambassador. To Perez, the priest in charge of the Jesuit mission at Malacca, positive and explicit orders are sent that he must leave: "You must not continue to waste your labours upon a town so unworthy and ungrateful." If Perez wishes to do so, he may, however, leave the lay-brother to work in the school. There was always hope for the children.

The letters to Baertz contain instructions about some administrative details, and exhortations to humility; but their main purpose is still to see that the excommunication of Ataide is promulgated. On November 13th, which was probably the day before the Portuguese ships sailed for Malacca, two letters were written dealing with this point—one addressed to Baertz, the other (to make assurance doubly sure) to Baertz and Perez jointly. There is nothing in the least vindictive in either.

Again the reasons advanced for the promulgation of the sentence of excommunication is a pity for Ataide and a wish to inspire him with such sentiments of penitence as may save his soul from hell. Another reason is that by inflicting ecclesiastical punishment upon a person of importance, there would be less danger of future interference. Francis therefore orders Baertz to secure a document from the Bishop at Goa, with instructions to have it read from the pulpit at Malacca, announcing that Alvaro d'Ataide by resisting the Papal Nuncio had incurred *ipso facto* the penalty of excommunication from the Catholic Church.

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November 19th, the day appointed for the junk to arrive for Francis, passed, but no junk appeared. The next day, just after he had finished saying Mass, Francis was stricken by his old enemy, fever. He probably at once divined that the time had come for a longer journey than any to Canton and Peking. At the conclusion of his last letter he had written, "I shall not die before the time appointed by God, but for a long while life has been a burden to me, and to die has been my prayer." That prayer was about to be answered.

Food was running low at Sancian, for as soon as the Portuguese ships left, the authorities in Canton cut off supplies. Had Francis not died, he would have been obliged to sail away in the *Santa Croce* (the only ship now remaining) ignominiously defeated. Death was to be preferred to that.

The crew enrolled for Pereira's ship had been gathered together by Ataide. They did not want to incur the danger of displeasing their master by appearing unduly solicitous for Francis. But they probably did not realise how ill he was. As he did not complain, they naturally thought him merely indisposed.⁹

On Tuesday November 22nd, however, they took him on board. He found the rocking of the ship at night unendurable and the next morning asked to be carried back to shore. The only lodging that could be found for him was in a half-dismantled shed, through whose roof the rain dripped. As a protection from the cold he was given

⁹ Cf. Cros, vol. II, p. 354.

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a pair of seaman's heavy trousers and a rug. His supply of food was a handful of almonds. As he could eat nothing, this did not matter. But he was bled by an incompetent hand, and his fever grew worse.

Two days later in the evening they bled him again ; this time he fainted. On coming to he lay still without saying a word of complaint or asking for anything. Growing a little delirious, he began to preach, first in one language then in another, but always with a radiant face.

In his lucid intervals he prayed. One of the languages he used was understood by none of those around his pallet. It is supposed that this was the Basque of his childhood. But generally he used the Psalms in Latin, or made his favourite ejaculations, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me !" "Mother of God, remember me !" ¹⁰

So it went on for more than a week — delirium during which Francis recognised nobody, followed by intervals during which his mind was unclouded. On one of these occasions, as the Chinese, Anthony, afterwards related, he turned his burning eyes on the Tamil boy, Christopher, exclaiming, "How sorry I am for you ! How sorry I am for you !" Some months later Christopher, who had been living in concubinage, was accidentally killed by an arquebus.

It was now plain to the watchers around his bed that Francis was sinking. He was without sufficient strength to speak, but he kept his eyes fastened upon a crucifix

¹⁰ Cf. *Mon. Xav.*, vol. II, p. 79 ; *Cros*, vol. II, p. 348 ; *Brou*, vol. II, p. 364.

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that Anthony had propped up before him. Shortly before dawn on Saturday, December 3rd,¹¹ Anthony (who was at the time alone with Francis) put a candle into his hand, for he saw that death was very near. The first glimmer of day touched the edge of the sea with gold ; but the clouding eyes did not see it, for they were now gazing at the Light of the World. The parched lips moved once more as Anthony bent to light the candle. While he was doing so he heard Francis murmur a line from the *Te Deum* :

In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in aeternum.

¹¹ This is the date established by Père Brou (vol. II, pp. 366, 442). The date given by Pères Cros and Thibaut is November 27th, and that by the Breviary as December 2nd. As December 3rd would seem to be the correct date, the day on which the feast of Francis Xavier is kept is also the date of his death.

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Père Thibaut's recent edition of the *Lettres* has been useful, as was also the case with Father Coleridge's sixty-year-old rendering of the same material and Léon Pagès' still older translation.

Popular lives of Francis Xavier have been many, and to some of these I am indebted. By far the best, it seems to me, is that by André Bellesort, though I dissent from one of his main conclusions. After M. Bellesort I should place Mrs. Yeo. Miss Stewart gives from the Protestant point of view an account of the saint that is illuminating on special points, and Mr. Stranks, as an Anglican missionary in Japan, has special advantages when dealing with the years 1549-51.

A German Jesuit, Pater Schurhammer, is now engaged upon a four-volume work in which he promises us new documentary material. But judging from his provisional short biography, there is slight likelihood of any important revision of our estimate of Francis to be expected from this.

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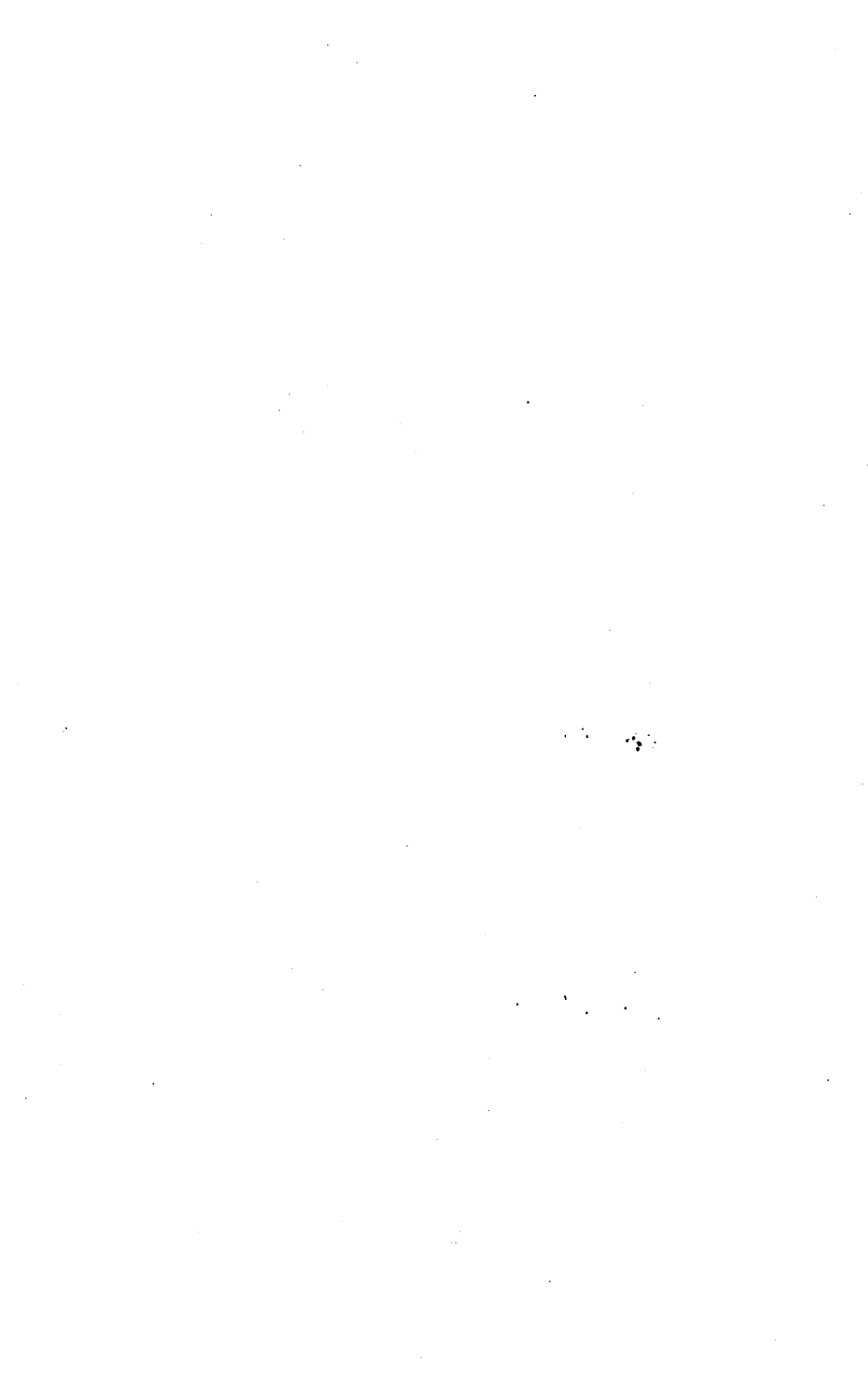
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PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES, D.D.

Archbishop, New York.

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